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THE YEAR OF THE ALTERNATIVES

Merry Christmas, and Happy New Year to all you **AMAZING HEROES** readers. And 1984 was a pretty good year, too—well, there were a few exceptions, in world affairs and such, but for **AH**, it was a fine year.

Looking back over this year's crop of **AH**, I noticed an interesting trend: the increasing presence of alternative comics publishers, especially in the previews department. After all, in its first 24 issues, **AMAZING HEROES** spotlighted only three alternative features; however, in the past year, **AH** has cover featured no less than eight alternatives—and that's in addition to several preview articles that weren't cover featured, which focused on titles like *Evangeline*, *Mr. Monster*, and *Night Music*. All told, we cover featured one title from Pacific, a cross selection of Aardvark-Vanaheim heroes, one title from Vortex, one title from (ahem) Fantagraphics Books, Continuity's fine, Eagle Comics' Judge Dredd, one title from Comico and one title from Eclipse. Proof positive, we think, that the alternatives are holding their own in these perilous days. (And, on a more self-congratulatory level, that **AH** is covering the entire spectrum of comic book publishing!)

Each of the 24 issues this year has been special in its own way. I don't dare take up the room here to recount how great last year's crop of **AH**s were, so just take a look at the back issues listings two page back. I even considered trying to just pick out my favorite **AMAZING HEROES** cover of 1984, but I found that to be totally impossible. But special thanks for providing **AH** cover quality above and beyond the call of duty must go to the A-V crew (#42), Willie Blyberg (#43), Dennis Fujitake (#49), Michael Golden (#51), Brian Bolland (#52), Kevin Nowlan (#56), Leonardi/Mignola/Potts/Gordon/Austin (#60), and Sergio Aragones (#61). Thank you, guys, you made **AMAZING HEROES** look good.

Collectors should take special note of this issue, as we begin a special limited feature this issue especially for you: "The Golden Age Directory" by Peter Lust, Steve Johnson, and (the infamous) Lou Mougin. The index will tell you where to find and read, and possibly own, Golden Age stories without having to pay the price for a Golden Age Comic. The index provides specifics about the reprinting of Golden Age stories in comic books since the beginning of the Silver Age. This is quite a piece of work and we'd like to thank Lou for giving us the chance to print it here. Spread the word to your friends who are Golden Age fans.

And a very special thanks to Chas. Gillen for this issue's Silly Cover. In my humble estimation it is the best we've run in a while. It made me laugh long and hard. (It ain't that hard to make Dave laugh hard. —*Exec. Ed.*)

I'll talk to ya' later.

—Dave

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NEWSFLASHES

ELRIC AT FIRST: This February, Michael Moorcock's famous sword-and-sorcery character, Elric, will return, courtesy of First Comics. The plan is to adapt all of the thus-far unadapted *Elric* stories, beginning with *The Sailor on the Seas of Fate*. Eventually, *Bane of the Black Sword*, *The Vanishing Tower*, *Stormbringer*, and stories from *The Weird of the White Wolf* will be adapted to the comic book.

The series will be bi-monthly, and will be printed in full-color on Baxter paper (similar to First's ***Badger*** and ***Nexus***), with a $1.75 cover price. The creative team remains ROY THOMAS, MICHAEL T. GILBERT, and GEORGE FREEMAN.



Elric returns to comics courtesy of First Comics this February.

MOORE ON FLAGG: ALAN MOORE, the celebrated writer of DC's ***Swamp Thing***, will be writing a multi-part back-up story in ***American Flagg!*** The first story, which appears in ***Flagg!*** **#21**, spotlights the *Mark Thrust* television show that Reuben Flagg starred in prior to becoming a lawman. In the second story, Luther Ironheart is featured, and Reul the Cat stars in the third one. Other Plex-Mall characters will follow thereafter.

LARRY STROMAN, who had previously been HOWARD CHAYKIN's assistant, will be penciling and inking the series. Each story will run eight pages.

SHATTERED: A comic book that was completely produced on a MacIntosh computer will debut from First Comics this February.

Shatter is the creation of airbrush artist MICHAEL SAENZ, and the story was written by PETER GILLIS. The story concerns a 21st-century policeman in a world where everything is computerized, all jobs are temporary, and corporate headhunters take their job very seriously.

At the time of ***Shatter***'s debut, it will also begin appearing as an eight-page back-up series in MIKE GRELL's ***Jon Sable, Freelance***.

MUNDEN'S MYSTERY: Ms. Tree will be featured in an upcoming "Munden's Bar" back-up, slated to appear in ***Grimjack #11***. The appearance will be written and pencilled by Ms. Tree co-creators MAX ALLAN COLLINS and TERRY BEATTY. "Black Flame's" regular inker, DON LOMAX, will be inking Beatty's pencils.

Ms. Tree stars in her own monthly title, published by Aardvark-Vanaheim.

SURPRISE!: In a surprise switch, the creative teams on ***The Incredible Hulk*** and ***Alpha Flight*** are trading pieces. Thus, beginning with ***Hulk*** **#313**, JOHN BYRNE will be writing and drawing the adventures of the green-skinned goliath,

Shatter, MICHAEL SAENZ's radical new concept in comics: illustrated by computer.





JOHN BYRNE's interpretation of the Hulk (pencil drawing)

while BILL MANTLO and MIKE MIGNOLA will take over ***Alpha Flight*** with **#28**. When the creators switch, the characters will cross over into each other's series.

Byrne plans to treat the Hulk as he had been treated back in the early '60s, when he was locked in the concrete room under the lake, pounding on the door. "That's primal Hulk," Byrne said.

SECOND WARS: Beginning in April, the sequel to Marvel's enormously successful ***Secret Wars*** will debut, called (appropriately enough) ***Secret Wars II***. The series will run for nine issues, and it will be written by JIM SHOOTER and drawn by SAL BUSCEMA and STEVE LEIALOHA. The series will be edited by BOB BUDIANSKY.

According to Shooter, the series will affect nearly two dozen titles, and with every issue of

AL WILLIAMSON contributes a story to ***Time Spirits #4***



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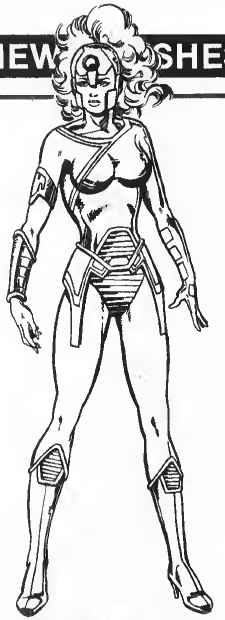
the series, it will cross over into at least three regular Marvel titles. The first issue will tie together with ***New Mutants* #30**, ***Captain America* #318**, ***X-Men* #196**, and ***Iron Man* #197**.

ADDED AVENGERS: Beginning in 1985, the West Coast Avengers will receive their own monthly title. STEVE ENGLEHART will write the series, and AL MILGROM and JOE SINNOTT will handle the artistic chores. Englehart will also write an upcoming ***Vision and Scarlet Witch*** 12-part Limited Series. Both series will debut with double-sized issues, which will lead into cross-over stories in their second issues. RICH HOWELL will pencil.

MARVEL MERRY-GO-ROUND: BERNI WRIGHTSON will be the regular cover artist on the ***Gargoyle*** Limited Series, which is written by J.M. DeMATTEIS and drawn by MARK BADGER. . . The contents of ***Peter Parker, the Spectacular Spider-Man* #101** have once again been changed. It is now titled "Echoes," and will be written by CARY BURKETT and drawn by JACK ABEL. Issue **#104** will be scripted by BILL MANTLO, and features the return of the Rocket Racer. . . The CRAIG ANDERSON-scripted story that was to appear in ***Peter Parker* #101** will now be appearing in ***Spider-Man* #264**. . . WILLIAM JOHNSON will be the new artist on ***Transformers***, beginning with **#7**. HERB TRIMPE will do the honors on **#5** and **#6**. . . ***Dreadstar*** goes back to bi-monthly frequency with **#18**. . . In ***Timespirits* #4**, STEVE PERRY's stories will be illustrated by TOM YEATES, RICK VEITCH, STEVE BISSETTE, and AL WILLIAMSON. . . Shaman from ***Alpha Flight*** will appear in ***Iron Men* #95**. . . Captain Britain will pop up in ***Captain America* #306**. . . Shanna the She-Devil and Ka-Zar guest star in ***Avengers* #258**; the two will also show up in ***Hulk* #313** and ***Alpha Flight* #28**.

TWO-SIDED OUTSIDERS: With **#24**, DC's ***Batmen and the Outsiders*** will adopt the hard-cover/softcover plan similar to the method already used in the ***Teen Titans*** and ***Legion of Super-Heroes*** books. ALAN DAVIS will be drawing several issues of the title, in order for regular artist JIM APARO to gain enough advance to do both titles once they begin appearing. Regular ***BATO*** writer MIKE W. BARR will continue to write both books.

DELUXE ACQUISITIONS: Deadline and production problems have pushed back the second issue of ***Wally Wood's T.H.U.N.D.E.R. Agents*** to a January release, but plans are to go monthly with this 48-page, $2.00 title as soon as time permits.



A new character from DC's ***Crisis on Infinite Earths*** *Harbinger. Designed by George Perez.*

© 1984 DC Comics

However, Deluxe has just announced the signing of DAVE COCKRUM's ***Futurians*** to the line. The series, which originally appeared as a Marvel graphic novel, will begin appearing this summer as a 32-page, $1.50 book.

Additionally, MURPHY ANDERSON, best known for his '60s and '70s work on such DC Comics as ***The Spectre***, ***Atomic Knights***, ***Adam Strange***, and ***Supermen***, has joined Deluxe as the inker on Cockrum's strip in ***Wally Wood's T.H.U.N.D.E.R. Agents***.

DELUXE MISCELLANIA: BOB McLEOD, the co-creator of Marvel Comics' ***New Mutants***, and a veteran at both Marvel and DC, has signed with Deluxe Comics. McLeod will pencil and ink the "Dynamo" strip in Deluxe's second title, ***Teles***

NEWSFLASHES NEWSFLASHES

of T.H.U.N.D.E.R

Prior commitments prevent McLeod from working on "Dynamo" until December, and the debut of ***Tales*** has accordingly been pushed back until late March.

KEITH GIFFEN will co-plot and drew a strip in ***Tales***, this one featuring Menthor. RICK BRYANT will ink this series, and STEVE PERRY will script it. As for the Iron Maiden strip, Marvel veteren ROGER McKENZIE will write it, but the artist is yet undetermined.

TWO NEW FROM AARDVARK-VANAHEIM: This February, two new bi-monthly series will debut from Aardvark-Vanaheim. ***Gene Dey's Black Zeppelin*** will feature mystery, fantasy, and adventure stories done by the late Canadian artist, and other, unannounced artists.

Cerebus Jam #1 will feature other artists' renditions of DAVE SIM's famous aardvark. The cover on the first issue will be by BILL SIENKIEWICZ, and the book will contain stories by Sim, Sim's assistant GERHARD, MURPHY ANDERSON, WILL EISNER, and TERRY AUSTIN.

Both titles will be 32 black-and-white pages with color covers and will sell for $1.70.

JOURNEY SWITCHES: With issue #15, ***Journey***, WILLIAM MESSNER-LOEBS's frontier saga starring Wolverine MacAlistaire, has moved from Aardvark-Vanaheim to Fantagraphics Books. With #17, ***Journey*** will graduate to white paper and a $2.00 cover price. The first Fantagraphics Books issue of ***Journey*** was released in early December.

Fantagraphics Books is also planning on collecting the early ***Journey*** tales (including the "pilot" story in ***Cerebus***) into a squarebound volume.

KINDA NEW PUBLISHER: STEVE SCHANES, late of the defunct Pacific Comics, has come back with a new firm, Black Thorne. The publisher will deal exclusively in black-and-white trade paperback books and portfolios.

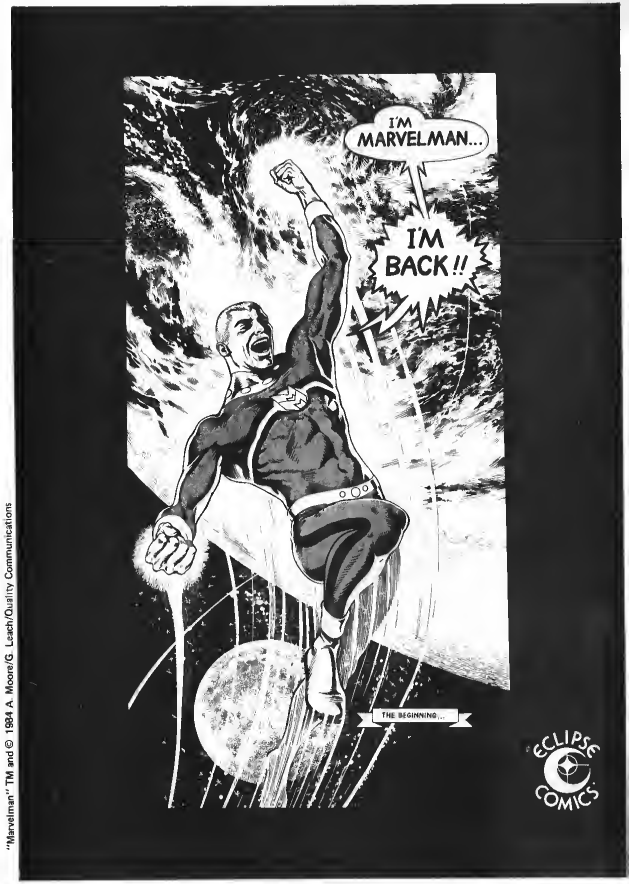
"The Reuben Award Series" will be a series of volumes reprinting comic strips that have won the prestigious award. In late December, ***Gasoline Alley*** will be released, and it will run 72 black-and-white pages with a color cover. The next volume, due in early 1985, will reprint CHESTER GOULD's classic ***Dick Tracy*** strip in the same format. The books will cost $5.95 apiece.

DOG BOY



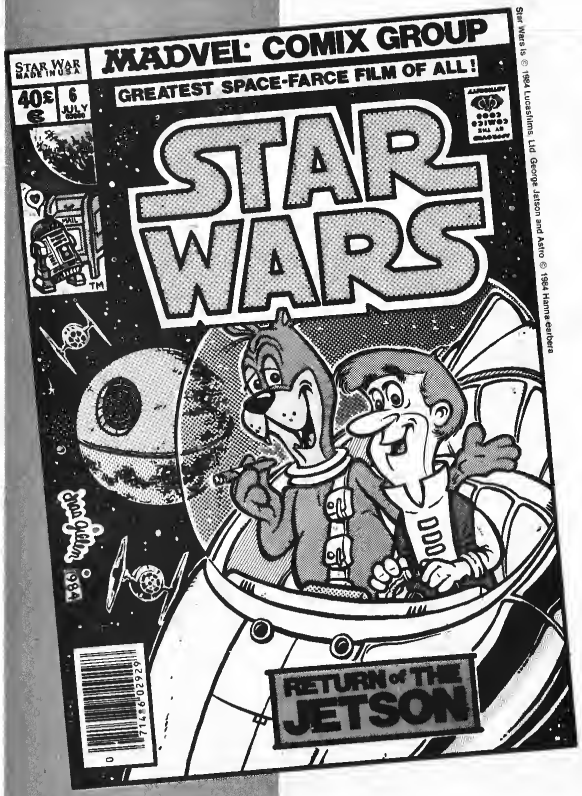
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FANS BEST FRIEND



"Marvelman" TM and © 1984 A. Moore/G. Leach/Quality Communications

by Chas. Gillen



COMING DISTRACTIONS

AARDVARK-VANAHEIM

☐ **CEREBUS THE AARDVARK #70**
Story/Art/Cover **Dave Sim**
[$1.70 direct sales black-and-white comic; ships 1/15]

☐ **normalman #7**
"Who Killed Sgt. Fluffy *This* Time? This issue parodies *DNAgents*, among other things.
Story/Art/Cover **Valentino**
[$2.00 direct sales color comic, ships 1/15]



© 1984 Valentino

AMERICOMICS

☐ **BLOOD RITES starring NIGHTVEIL**
Nightveil continues her fight with the Dark Side of the occult when she becomes the protector of a psychic child.
Story **Steve Ringgenberg**
Art **Heike & Anderson**
[$3.25 Hudson paper graphic novelette; 52 pages; ships Jan.]

☐ **CAPTAIN PARAGON #4**
This is the final issue. After this, Captain Paragon is absorbed into the *Sentinels of Justice*.
Story **Dan St. John**
Art/Cover **Guler & Dzuban**
[$1.75 direct-sales color comic; ships Jan.]

☐ **DRAGONFLY #1**
Story/Art **Rik Levins**
[$1.75 color comic; ships Jan.]

☐ **MS. VICTORY SPECIAL**
[$2.00 color comic; ships Jan.]

ARCHIE COMICS

☐ **MIGHTY CRUSADERS #11**
Two members fall victim to the Brain Emperor, and two new villains are introduced.
Story **Rich Margopoulos**
Art **Kupperberg & Glacoia**
Cover **Ayers & Glacoia**
[75¢ color comic; ships 12/11; newsstand o/s 1/1]

DC COMICS

☐ **AMETHYST #5**
Amethyst and Carnelian try to get back to Gemworld.
Story **Mishkin & Cohn**
Art **Estrada & Tanghal**
Cover **Cullins & Tanghal**
[75¢ color comic; ships 1/22; newsstand o/s 2/14]

☐ **ARAK, SON OF THUNDER #44**
Arak battles a god of Death!
Story **Rey & Dann Thomas**
Art/Cover **Tony DeZuniga**
[75¢ color comic; ships 1/22; newsstand o/s 2/14]

☐ **ATARI FORCE #17**
What are the Tazlings doing to Blackjak?
Story **Mike Baron**
Art **Barreto & Villagran**
Cover **Barreto & Garcia Lopez**
[75¢ color comic; ships 1/15; newsstand o/s 2/7]

☐ **BATMAN #383**
If the Catwoman is dead—who is prowling the late-night streets of Gotham?
Story **Doug Moench**
Art **Heberg & Alcala**
Cover **Heberg & Giordano**
[75¢ color comic; ships 1/22; newsstand o/s 2/14]

☐ **BEST OF DC DIGEST #60**
A collection of humor material from Sergio

COMING COMICS CHECKLIST

Shipping Dates: January 1-15

Dragonfly premieres, from ◄ Americomics!

The final issue of Captain ◄◄ Paragon!

COMING COMICS CHECKLIST

Shipping Dates: January 1-15

Beginning DC's Deadman reprint series, with art by Neal Adams!►

Hawkman premieres, by Isabella and Howell!►

Aragonés, Berni Wrightson, Frank Robbins, and more!
Cover Wally Wood
Back Cover Basil Wolverton
[$1.50 digest comic; ships 1/15; newsstand o/s 2/7]

☐ **DC COMICS PRESENTS #61**
Ambush Bug pulls a switch on the Man of Steel!
Story Giffen & Fleming
Art/Cover Keith Giffen
[75¢ color comic; ships 1/15; newsstand o/s 2/7]

☐ **DC UNIVERSE: CRISIS ON INFINITE EARTHS #2**
Fifteen heroes and villains race through time to save the Earths.
Story Wolfman & Wein
Art Perez & Giordano
Cover George Perez
[75¢ color comic; ships 1/15; newsstand o/s 2/7]

☐ **DEADMAN #1**
Reprinting the first tale of Deadman from *Strange Tales*. (Also includes a short story drawn by **Neal Adams**.)
Story Arnold Drake
Art Infantino & Rousseau
[$1.75 white paper color comic; ships 1/15]

☐ **FLASH #345**
Kid Flash destroys The Flash's case!
Story Cary Bates
Art Infantino & McLaughlin
Cover Infantino & Janson
[75¢ color comic; ships 1/22; newsstand o/s 2/14]

☐ **THE FURY OF FIRESTORM #35**
Killer Frost teams up with Plastique!
Story Gerry Conway
Art Kayanan & Kupperberg
[75¢ color comic; ships 1/15; newsstand o/s 2/7]

☐ **HAWKMAN #1**
Murderous beings are after the Hawks!
Story Tony Isabella
Art/Cover Howell & Alcala
[75¢ color comic; ships 1/15; newsstand o/s 2/7]

☐ **JEMM, SON OF SATURN #9**
Synn attacks New Bhok!
Story Greg Potter
Art Colan & McLeod
[75¢ color comic; ships 1/22; newsstand o/s 2/14]

☐ **JONNI THUNDER a.k.a. THUNDERBOLT #4**
Back in L.A., it's a spectacular showdown in the Hollywood Bowl!
Story Rey & Dann Thomas
Art/Cover Dick Giordano
[75¢ color comic; ships 1/15; newsstand o/s 2/7]

☐ **JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA #238**
Superman, Wonder Woman, and the Flash team up with Aquaman's JLA to battle Aliegro, the Mad Maestro in Russia.
Story Gerry Conway
Art/Cover Patton & Machlan
[75¢ color comic; ships 1/15; newsstand o/s 2/7]

☐ **LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES #10**
Election Day on Earth—and someone's trying to kill all the candidates.
Story Paul Levitz
Art/Cover Lightle & Mahlstedt
[$1.25 white-paper color comic; ships 1/22]

☐ **OMEGA MEN #26**
The Spidar System has devastated the Vegrin System. Plus a back-up written by **Alan Moore**.
Story Todd Klein
Art/Cover McManus & Magyar
[$1.25 direct-sales white-paper comic; ships 1/22]

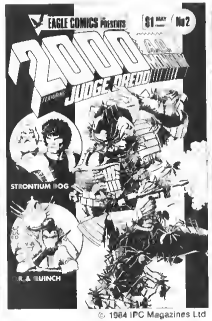
☐ **STAR TREK #14**
More adventures in the Mirror Universe!
Story Mike W. Barr
Art Sutton & Villagran
Cover Tom Sutton
[75¢ color comic; ships 1/22; newsstand o/s 2/14]

☐ **SUPERMAN #407**
Jimmy Olsen, Lois Lane, and Perry White share Superman's powers.
Story Gerry & Carla Conway
Art Novick & Hunt
[75¢ color comic; ships 1/22; newsstand o/s 1/14]

☐ **SUPERMAN: THE SECRET YEARS #4**
The first appearance of Superboy as Superman!
Story Bob Rozakis
Art Swan & Scheffenberger
Cover Frank Miller
[75¢ color comic; ships 1/15; newsstand o/s 2/7]

☐ **TALES OF THE TEEN TITANS #53**
[Delayed from last month]
[75¢ color comic; ships 1/15; newsstand o/s 2/7]

☐ **VIGILANTE #17**
The Vigilante's last case!
Story Marv Wolfman
Art/Cover Cowan & Magyar
[$1.25 white-paper color comic; ships 1/15; newsstand o/s 2/7]



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EAGLE COMICS

☐ **2000 A.D. #2**
Judge Dredd: "The Black Plague"
Judge Dredd fights an army of mutant spiders.
Story John Wagner
Art Ron Smith
D.R. & Quinch: "D.R. and Quinch Go Girl Crazy"
Story Alan Moore
Art Alan Davis
Strontium Dog: "Death's Head Part Two"
Story Alan Grant
Art Carlos Ezquerra
Cover Brian Bolland
[$1.00 four-color comic; ships 1/10]

ECLIPSE COMICS

☐ **ALIEN WORLDS #3**
This final issue features work by **Frank Brunner, Al Williamson, Bo Hampton,** and **Bruce Jones.**
Cover John Pound
[$1.75 full-color comic; ships 1/2]

☐ **AZTEC ACE #10**
"The Lord of the Smoking Mirror"
Story Doug Moench
Art Day & Redondo
Cover Dan Day
[$1.75 color comic; ships 1/8]

☐ **CROSSFIRE #6**
Rainbow teams with Crossfire in this issue, which takes us into the Hollywood animation business.
Story Mark Evanier
Art/Cover Dan Spiegle
[$1.50 Baxter color comic; ships 1/8]

☐ **MR. MONSTER #1**
A three-part tale of the occult (originally scheduled to appear at Pacific).
Story/Co-Art/Cover: **Michael T. Gilbert**
Co-Art William Messner-Loebs
[$1.75 color comic; ships 1/2]

FANTAGRAPHICS

☐ **JOURNEY #16**
The finale of the Fort Miami saga! Wolf Marie is found out and attempts to escape—plus the return of Wolverine MacAllistaire.
Story/Art/Cover W. Messner-Loebs
[$1.70 black-and white comic; ships 1/7]

FICTIONEER

☐ **SOUTHERN KNIGHTS #9**
Story Henry Vogel
Art/Cover Wojtkiewicz & Kent
Plus an installment of "Missing Beings"
Story Henry Vogel
Art Bill Neville
[$1.75 black-and-white comic; ships in Jan.]

FIRST COMICS

☐ **THE BADGER #5**
"Oak"
The Badger returns to Wisconsin and helps Ham the Weather Wizard battle a multinational conglomerate for the life of... a tree?
Story Mike Baron
Art Reinhold & Dee
Cover Jeff Butler
[$1.75 full-color white-paper comic; ships 1/7]

☐ **GRIMJACK #10**
"Herdtimers"
Grimjack becomes a temporal bounty hunter and tracks a beautiful time jumper to Texas.
Story John Ostrander
Art/Cover Timothy Truman
Munden's Bar: "Doppelgangster"
Story Ostrander & Close
Art Jerry Ordway
[$1.25 direct-sales color comic; ships 1/14]

☐ **NEXUS #8**
"Up and Out: The Concusion of the Trialogue Trilogy"
Nexus, Judah Maccabee, and The Badger enter the third and final ring of the bowl-shaped world end battle their own minds.
Story Mike Baron
Art Steve Rude
Coloring Les Dorscheid
[$1.75 full-color white paper comic; ships 1/7]

☐ **THE P.I.'S #3**
"You'll Believe a Man Can Die"
The conclusion of the three-part miniseries. Who will be the next victim of the comic book killer?
Story Max Collins
Art/Cover Staton & Beatty
[$1.25 direct sales color comic; ships 1/14]



© 1984 First Comics, Inc.

COMING COMICS CHECKLIST

Shipping Dates: January 1-15

The Badger is back, and First has him. Art by Reinhold ◄ and Dee!

Crosstire and Rainbow ◄◄ team up!

Mr. Monster premieres, by Gilbert ◄◄ and Loebs!

The current Journey saga reaches its ◄◄ finale!

COMING DISTRACTIONS

COMING COMICS CHECKLIST

Shipping Dates: January 1-15

A new deluxe format for Steve Canyon magazine►

The Ewoks premiere in their own comic!►►

HARRIER

☐ **CONQUEROR #4**
"Open Planet"
Members of the *Conqueror* team go on a special mission
Story **Martin Lock**
Art **Dave Harwood**
"Last Game"
An alien "toy" runs amok.
Story **Martin Lock**
Art **Campbell & Harwood**
Cover **John Bolton**
[$1.75 black-and-white comic; ships in Jan.]

KITCHEN SINK

☐ **STEVE CANYON #5**
The first issue of this magazine as a square-bound, 76-page, bi-monthly. This issue features the initial appearance of Summer Smith. Also, a sidebar in which **Caniff** talks about the couple's long romance.
Story/Art/Cover **Milton Caniff**
[$4.95 square-bound, direct-sales, black-and-white magazine; ships in Jan.]



1984 Field Enterprises

MANUSCRIPT

☐ **COMICS REVIEW #9**
Over 50 pages of current comic strips, including *Spider Man* by **Stan Lee** and *Bloom County* by **Berke Breathed**
[$2.00 black-and-white comic; ships January]

MARVEL COMICS

☐ **ALPHA FLIGHT #22**
Featuring a new villainess: Pink Pearl



© 1984 Marvel Comics Group

Story **John Byrne**
Art/Cover **Byrne & Wiacek**
[75¢ color comic; ships 1/8; newsstand o/s 1/29]

☐ **AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #264**
Introducing Silver Sable—is she a heroine or a villainess?
Story **Tom DeFalco**
Art/ Cover **Frenz & Rubinstein**
[65¢ color comic; ships 1/8; newsstand o/s 1/29]

☐ **CAPTAIN AMERICA #305**
Guest starring Captain Britain
Story **J.M.DeMatteis**
Art **Neary & Janke**
Cover **Paul Neary**
[65¢ color comic; ships 1/8 newsstand o/s 1/29]

☐ **CONAN THE KING #28**
Guest starring Red Sonja
Story **Alan Zelenetz**
Art **Silvestri & Isherwood**
[$1.25 48-page color comic; ships 1/1; newsstand o/s 1/22]

☐ **DAREDEVIL #218**
Featuring the Jester
Story **Denny O'Neil**
Art **Sal Buscema**
Cover **Keith Pellard**
[65¢ color comic; ships 1/1; newsstand o/s 1/22]

☐ **DAZZLER #37**
Story **Bob DeNatale**
Art **Morgan & Bulanadi**
[65¢ color comic; ships 1/8; newsstand o/s 1/29]

☐ **EWOKS #1**
The Ewoks battle Gantu, the Giant.
Story **Dave Manak**
Art **Kremer & D'Agostino**
Cover **Warren Kremer**
[65¢ color comic; ships 1/8 newsstand o/s 1/29]

☐ **GROO THE WANDERER #3**
Story/Art/Cover **Sergio Aragones**

DEADMAN LIVES!



The legendary Neal Adams.
Stories and art so great they had to be printed again.
A seven issue mini-series in the deluxe format.

FROM DC COMICS. WHERE LEGENDS LIVE.

COMING DISTRACTIONS

COMING COMICS CHECKLIST

Shipping Dates: January 1-15

Interpolator.....**Mark Evanier**
[75¢ color comic; ships 1/1; newsstand o/s 1/23]

☐ **INDIANA JONES #29**
Featuring *Temple of Doom*'s Lao Che as the villain.
Story.....**Linda Grant**
Art.....**Villamente & Sulenadi**
[85¢ color comic; ships 1/1; newsstand o/s 1/23]

☐ **MICRONAUTS #6**
Featuring a new character who will become a Micronaut.
Story.....**Peter Gillis**
Art.....**K. Jones & Patterson**
Cover.....**Keith Pollard**
[75¢ color comic; ships 1/1; newsstand o/s 1/24]

☐ **MOONSHADOW #1**
The origin of Moonshadow, and his youth in the Interplanetic Zoo.
Story.....**J.M. DeMatteis**
Art/Cover.....**John Jay Muth**
[$1.75 color comic; ships 1/8]

☐ **MOTHER TERESA #1**
The story of one of the world's most beloved religious figures.
Story.....**David Michelinie**
Art/Cover.....**Tartaglione & Sinnott**
[$1.25 color comic, ships 12/25; newsstand o/s 1/15]

☐ **NEW MUTANTS #27**
Featuring the origin of the son of Professor X.
Story.....**Chris Claremont**
Art/Cover.....**Bill Sienkiewicz**
[65¢ color comic; ships 1/1; newsstand o/s 1/22]

☐ **PETER PORKER #1**
The Spider-Ham battles Duktor Doom.
Story.....**Steve Skeates**
Art.....**Armstrong & Albelo**
Cover.....**Michael Golden**
[75¢ color comic, ships 1/1; newsstand o/s 1/22]

☐ **PLANET TERRY #2**
Featuring Verman the Villa.
Story.....**Lannie Harman**
Pencils/Cover.....**Warren Kremer**
Inks.....**Jan D'Agostino**
[65¢ color comic; ships 1/1; newsstand o/s 1/22]

☐ **POWER PACK #10**
Guest starring Marrina of Alpha Flight.
Story.....**Louise Simonson**
Art/Cover.....**B. Anderson & Wiacek**
[65¢ color comic; ships 1/8; newsstand o/s 1/29]

☐ **RED SONJA #9**
Story.....**Louise Simonson**
Pencils/Cover.....**Mary Wilshire**
Inks.....**Art Nichols**
[65¢ color comic; ships 1/1, newsstand o/s 1/22]

☐ **SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN #111**
Story.....**Michael Fleisher**
Art.....**Gary Kwapisz**
Cover.....**Joe Jusko**
[$1.50 black-and-white magazine, ships 1/6, news stand o/s 1/29]

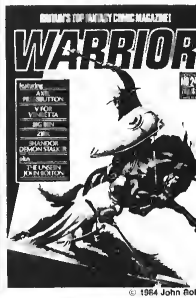
☐ **THE THING #23**
The Thing Is back on Earth.
Story.....**Mike Carlin**
Art/Cover.....**Wilson & Layton**
[75¢ color comic; ships 1/1, newsstand o/s 1/22]

☐ **WALLY THE WIZARD #2**
Wally is in a contest in which he can't use his magic.
Story.....**Sid Jacobson**
Art.....**Post & D'Agostino**
Cover.....**Bob Helling**
[75¢ color comic; ships 1/1; newsstand o/s 1/22]

☐ **WEB OF SPIDER-MAN #2**
A new set of villains: The Vulturians.
Story.....**Louise Simonson**
Art.....**LaRoque & Mooney**
[75¢ color comic; ships 1/1; newsstand o/s 1/22]

QUALITY

☐ **WARRIOR #22**
Laser Eraser and Pressbutton: "One of Those Days in Downtown Dalta-Five"
The first of a two-part atory, with a new art ist
Story.....**Pedro Henry**
Art.....**Alan Davis**
Shandor, Demon Stalker:
The final chapter of tha ten-year-long saga.
Story.....**Steve Moore**
Art.....**John Ridgway**
Big Ban:
A new storytlina begins as Ben bursts into tha harsh world of reality
Story.....**Dez Skinn**
Art.....**William Simpson**
V For Vandetta.
Evay is in the hands of the future police
Story.....**Alan Moore**
Art.....**David Lloyd**
Plus, an article on transferring "Prassbut ton" to its American incarnation, and an interview with **John Bolton**.
Cover.....**John Bolton**
[$2.00 white-paper magazine; on sale in Jan.]



© 1984 John Bolton

Moonshadow, a fairy tale for grown-ups, premieres!►

Mother Theresa gets her own comic book!►

. . . And the premiere of Peter Porker's own regular comic!►

——ADVERTISEMENT——

LETTERS TO: DALGODA™

To read the letters page of most comics, you have to purchase the comic. Letters pages are often the most dynamic and revealing part of a comic, allowing readers to talk back to the creators. We at Fantagraphics Books want everyone to read the wonderful and thoughtful letters that we have received after the publication of *Dalgoda* #2.

Deer People,

Dalgoda #2 was quite an intriguing one. Instead of plunging straight ahead into the fascinating stream of events originated in your debut issue, you took a bit of a break so that we could become more familiar with the characters. Also, I guess this is helpful in that it serves to emphasize that even in the farflung world of tomorrow, matters (especially bureaucratic matters) do not necessarily move along any more quickly or smoothly than they do in today's imperfect world.

Dalgoda's encounter with the dog-eating plant was wonderfully amusing. (Heartless me, laughing at the life-and death plight of a poor alien.) However, it was Dennie Fujitake's character portrayals that caught my attention this time. Rotenist Edwin Wallader was particularly delightful. He was a perfect picture of the socially strained scientist—pleasant yet unsure, polite yet more interested in his plants. (Of course, Jen Strnad's acute dialogue for him helped, too!) Even more impressive was Gunner Hathaway. In comics it seems that all females (well, almost all) fall into two physical categories. (1) Absolute bombshells who'll knock your eyes out or (2) mere ciphers. Intended to take up space on a page—but not much else. Hathaway is different, distinctive. She is certainly no bombshell; in fact, she looks a little seedy to me. But she has a personality, a vigor that gives her a peculiar charm. And Rosey Ravencrett himself is a nice version of the Almost-Perfect-American-Hero—i.e., he almost looks the part of a clean-cut wonderguy, but there is something a bit shifty about him. Indeed, only Dalgoda comes across as looking to be totally without fault—the true, upstanding, courageous Hero. (Of course, I might be influenced by the fact that when I read the word "Canide," I seem to distort it into "Canede.")

T.M. Mepis
Western Ontario
CANADA

Dear Fantegraphics Books,

Dalgoda is good. I don't know how it will sell, but I dig it. I like good science fiction. The interesting thing is, I almost didn't buy it at all. I frequent a store that bags all their stuff ahead of time, so it tends to cut back on my experimentation. The only reason I bought the book was because I recognized Strnad's name from some of my old underground comix. This month's *FF* (censored) *Peter Parker* was the same old (censored). Barry Smith is finally back to blow people away with the new *X-Men*. *Amer ican Flagg!* got a new artist. *Cap'n Quick and a Foozle* was great. *Ronin* finished real nice and you guys did a (censored) good job. Thumbs up for Dal

Daniel Preston
St. Cloud MN

Dear Dog Lovers

It's books like **Dalgoda** that keep me reading comics after all these years. Nothing profound, nothing earthshaking, just good solid writing and attractive art work. Enough seriousness to keep me interested, but enough humor to keep it fun. A few specific observations:

Dalgoda's people are not descended from Earth canines, but apparently from dog-like ancestors on Canis. Nonetheless, Dalgoda exhibits traits that are typically those of normal Earth bound dogs, such as acute hearing, acute sense of smell, and a large, indiscriminate appetite (I loved his reaction to the overripe hamburger in issue #1—it brought back memories of all the garbage cans plundered by a Labrador retriever I once had.) And of course there's the Mohlitz Strangulation from Reg? which obviously finds any differences between canine and Canidan too trivial to worry about. I trust you'll continue to reveal further similarities both physiological and psychological.

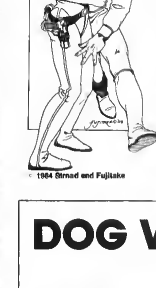
I appreciate the way Dennie Fujitake draws his people to look like real people—the men don't all look like bodybuilders and the women don't all look like *Playmates*. This realistic rendering complements Jen Strnad's writing, and makes for believable three-dimensional characters.

What does the symbol on Dalgoda's chest mean, and what exactly did he write at the bottom of the contract he signed in issue 1? In Dalgoda's writing Japanese or does Dennis just make up meaningless symbols that look Japanese?

Kenneth Smith is coloring is excellent. I'm glad to see colorists who know how to use better paper getting rich, vibrant color without sacrificing subtlety (in contrast to early attempts to take advantage of higher quality paper which looked like someone used a spatula to glop on day-glo paint).

Grimwood's Daughter is an interesting back-up feature, a dark, strangely naturalistic Elfstory to contrast the whimsical Dogs in Space. There are other contrasts and similarities—one is set in the future, the other in the past, but both have a very strong dose of verisimilitude. Both are centered around an impeding war of extinction but in one human and its potential victim, and in the other we are the aggressors. And in Dalgoda, the mood has thus far been light, but the potential is there for much more serious stories—while in Grimwood's Daughter, we are given a hint at the end of the first installment that pervading gloom may be broken from time to time by a little sunlight. I look forward to watching these two stories grow and develop.

Hank Hoeft
Arlington, TX


© 1984 Strnad and Fujitake

We will be publishing more letters to Dalgoda in every issue from #3 on. Send letters to Del c/o Fantagraphics Books, 707 Camino Mercado, Thousand Oaks, CA 91360. And watch this space for letters on Dalgoda #3!

DOG Vs. ZOMBDROID!

In the spectacular third issue of *Dalgoda*, our canine hero finds himself assaulted by a science-produced monstrosity! Story by **Strnad**, art by **Fujitake**, coloring by **Smith**!

Grimwood's Daughter

In the second chapter of the fantasy back-up, the Elves decide to go to war against the humans! Story by **Strnad**, art by **Nowlan**, coloring by **Smith**!

DALGODA #3 ships on Dacember 18—in time for Chrlstmas; DALGODA #4 ships on January 30!



1984 Strnad and Fujitake

FANTAGRAPHICS BOOKS™
Is Proud to Present the Continuing Saga of

JOURNEY™

THE ADVENTURES OF WOLVERINE MacALISTAIRE



"If you don't try *Journey*, you have only yourself to blame for missing one of the most unusual, most compelling, and best comic books around."
—*THE COMICS BUYER'S GUIDE*

"Number one by a long stretch."
—*R. FIORE, The Comics Journal*

"We love this book. Miss it and you miss an entirely unique experience in comics."
—*BUD PLANT, Distributor*

"This is a sort of comic I hope to see more of; for that to happen, we need to support each example as it comes along."
—*CHRIS PADGETT, Fantasy Adventure*

The first Fantagraphics Books issue, JOURNEY #15, ships in December.

(Retailers and distributors note: Since this and the following issue have already been solicited by the previous publisher, Aardvark-Vanaheim, we will be using their draws for both these issues, which will be released with a cover price of $1.70 ($2.00 Canada) as advertised. If you have any questions, call David Olbrich at 818-706-2437 for details.

© 1984 William Messner-Loebs



All art accompanying this article is © 1984 B.C. Boyer except where noted

WHO IS THAT MASKED MAN?

by Eric Yarber

Probably the best way to introduce B.C. Boyer and his creation The Masked Man is to say that they do a pretty good job of introducing each other. As Boyer puts it, "I'm just an average guy. I always want to read a good story with human interest and drama, and I like to tell stories like that. The Masked Man is just an average joe. He doesn't have any super powers or anything. He just knows how to use his dukes. He fights crime his way. I put stories together my way."

It's very easy to see this individualistic attitude reflected in *The Masked Man*. Punch-em-outs and seamy underworld exposes have always taken a back seat to character development in Boyer's world. (If you're wondering what "B.C." stands for, he says it stands for "Barbara Chuck." You heard it here first.) In a field covered with titles attempting to "out-cosmic" each other, *The Masked Man* remains a likeable down-to-earth series that manages to be oddly predictable at times as a result

Putting On The Mask

The Masked Man's origin reflected the interest in people and their dreams that Boyer often uses in his stories. Dick Carstairs, a young detective, spent years trying to live up to the comic-book hero fantasies that had meant so much to him as a child. One day circumstances called for such a hero. Dick promptly put on a mask and became one, albeit an all-too-human one. His story was narrated by his friend since childhood, a short journalist named Barney McAllister. Barney found Dick's successful outing as a hero more than simply the fulfillment of Dick's dreams. Somehow the Masked Man seemed to validate everyone's heroic fantasies. That was at least the way that Barney described the situation.

Actually, Barney's original assessment was about all that Boyer said at first. "The Masked Man" was a ten-page one-shot that he had written as an anthology story for Dean Mullaney's *Eclipse Magazine*.

"I thought up the Masked Man as a throwaway character," Boyer admitted. "I wanted to draw my own super-team strip and publish their adventures myself, influenced by Aardvark-Vanaheim and things like that. I needed money to do that so I wrote a story about this guy in a mask and tie. The only person publishing alternatives back then was Dean with his black and white *Eclipse Magazine*, so I sent him my ten-page idea."

Boyer had originally been inspired to go into comics by Neal Adams's work in *Deadman*. "It was the first time I'd seen something that made me realize that there were creators in the comics field," he said. He learned the basics of graphics from his father, Charles Boyer, an artist with the advertising department at Disneyland.

Two months after Boyer sent his



The Masked Man is attacked by Barney in the second issue of his own title—but is it really Barney?

story to Mullaney, the Eclipse editor called Boyer and indicated interest in the Masked Man. "I was busy drawing my other idea," Boyer explains, "so we spent some time looking for an artist to draw my Masked Man strip. Dean finally decided to go with my other ideas as well, which was 'The Incredible Seven.' It became a back-up in *Sabre*. Since that was only eight pages every two months, I had time to draw The Masked Man myself. When 'The Incredible Seven' finished, it gave me even more time to draw 'The Masked Man.' It turns out that the character I created as a throwaway is the one I'll be with forever."

The first "Masked Man" story was published in *Eclipse Magazine* #7 (November 1982). The first and second stories in the series were in black-and-white. "The Masked Man" then moved to full color with *Eclipse Monthly* #1 in August 1983. For 10 issues, "The Masked Man" remained the only regular feature in the book of irregularly-scheduled strips. When *Eclipse Monthly* ceased its run, *The Masked Man* was immediately scheduled as a bi-monthly book on baxter paper. The first issue, priced at $1.75, was set for December. Editing the new title as she had the regular feature was catherine yronwode.

"B.C.'s art is now at the point where we think it's strong enough for him to carry an entire book," Eclipse Publisher Dean Mullaney said. "When he started, he was much more interested in writing than drawing, and he's had very little formal training in art, but he's develped himself remarkably since his first stories. We're very happy to put his character into its own book, because 'The Masked Man' got the most mail and the most favorable mail of any character run in *Eclipse Monthly*."

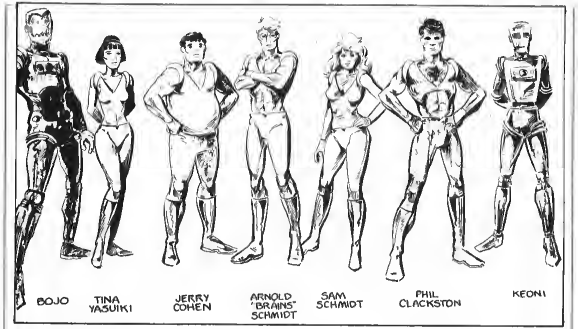
It almost wasn't the "Masked Man" that Boyer wound up drawing. The title of his original story was "White Collar Man." This wasn't quite to the tastes of his editors.

"cat and I thought it was fine for a one-shot," Mullaney recalled, "but the name was a bit too tongue-in-cheek for a character meant to be taken seriously. B.C. was reluctant at first to write the character as a series hero, but finally warmed to the idea. At that point, I suggested the name 'Masked Man.' cat thought it was great, and B.C. accepted it and went to work with it."

From a story Boyer sent to DC's NEW TALENT SHOWCASE.



Art © 1984 B.C. Boyer; characters © Marvel Comic Group



The Incredible Seven

Getting into The Spirit

It may be proper to bring up a question that has followed the Masked Man around since the beginning of his career. How much influence did Will Eisner's Spirit have on the creation of the Masked Man? Both were crime-fighters with street clothes and masks. Boyer's answer to the question was rather surprising.

"No one will believe me," he said, "but *The Spirit* had *no* influence on the Masked Man's creation. I created him as a throwaway character, remember, so the way he looks was simply my way of not having to design a costume for somebody who'd only use it for 10 pages. I'm tired of this constant flow of new and different costumes with elaborate insignias and colors on them. I just thought of a guy with a mask. All he had to do to get into costume was throw off his jacket, roll up his sleeves, and put on the mask.

"Later, cat mentioned The Spirit, and I said, 'What's a Spirit?' and she mentioned Eisner and I said 'Who's he?' So she turned me on to *The Spirit*, and I said 'Hey, this guy copies me!' I'm just glad I took off the Masked Man's coat and wrinkled up his sleeves, or else he'd *really* look like The Spirit."

cat yronwode was in an interesting position to discuss the two strips. She first made her name in the comics industry by her research on *The Spirit*, which led to her writing a great deal on the subject, including the "Central City Zeit-Geist" column in the current Kitchen Sink series of *Spirit* reprints. She was also editor of "The Masked Man." Having worked extensively with both Eisner and Boyer, she found a great deal of difference between the work of the two men.

"The resemblance between the Masked Man and The Spirit is really about the same as that between Superman and Spider Man," she said. "It's a genre: the costumed crime-fighter. If the Masked Man is an updated version of The Spirit, he's also an updated version of the Green Hornet, The Shadow, the original Crimson Avenger, Justin Wright, Midnight, and all those other non-super-powered men in masks who kept the Big City safe for decent folks like you and me. There were plenty of them in the past, and I'm sure there'll be more in the future."

yronwode felt that the human interest element was about all that linked *The Spirit* to *The Masked Man*. Other than that, the Masked Man turned out to have far less in common with The Spirit than he did with some of the others in the field. "There's nothing at all supernatural about the Masked Man," she gave as an example. "You've got to remember that The Spirit was put into suspended animation through some sort of secret formula and then came back from the dead, or supposed dead. The Masked Man is just a guy who put on a mask because there was a robbery around a costume shop and he'd read a lot of comic books as a kid. There's no mystical background to the Masked Man's stories as there so often is in The Spirit's. Even the name 'Spirit' suggests mystical undertones, while the Masked Man was simply a man in a mask."

When the Masked Man switched to color, yronwode made what she called "probably the most foolish decision I ever made as an editor" and decided to have him wear a blue mask. "Before that," she said, "he'd been in black-and-white and nobody had ever thought of his mask having a particular color. I deliberately chose a blue that wasn't the same as The Spirit's mask, but I still wish I hadn't done it."

She said that Boyer had not read a *Spirit* story until after the first color "Masked Man" had appeared. As she remembered, "I brought up the subject when he mentioned once how difficult it could be to write 10-page stories that were complete in themselves. I said, 'Well, if Will Eisner could write short comic stories, so can



From MASKED MAN #2.

you.' He said, 'Oh, did Will Eisner write 10-page stories?' He really *didn't* know.

"I told him to read some, but I was concerned that he read them from the standpoint of seeing the short story form in comics, which is a format not used much these days. I also compared that type of structure to that of a television show like *M*A*S*H*, in which each episode is a good short story about a continuing cast facing a new adventure each time, so I wasn't pushing him just toward *The Spirit*."

The comparisons with Eisner continued as "The Masked Man" grew in popularity, and Boyer decided to air his feelings on the subject once and for all with a tribute to Eisner's work on *The Spirit*. "Phantom Man" appeared in *Eclipse Monthly* #8 (June 1984). The story's title character was an aging "Lenny Winchester" clearly The Spirit fallen on hard times. Long since retired, a hot potato to his children, the Phantom Man nevertheless managed to put on the gloves and mask one last time to save the much younger Masked Man.

"Phantom Man" was one of Boyer's best stories to date and drew a widely favorable response, but Boyer insisted that fans were wrong when they interpreted the tale as symbolizing a type of "changing of the guard," implying a succession from The Spirit to the Masked Man.

"I tried to show in the story that The Spirit is much more powerful than the Masked Man," he said. "The Spirit has been around for years, become a legend, while the Masked Man is just a new kid on the block. That's why the Phantom Man carried Dick out at the end. Now, if you take that story realistically, the reason he as able to do that was that Dick was in that fight longer and had gotten beaten up more. He'd usually be able to outlast a 60-year old man, but not under *those* circumstances. By showing Phantom Man carrying the Masked Man, I was really trying to say, 'Look. The Spirit is an immortal character and I don't know if the Masked Man can ever come close to him. You'll notice at the end, though, that Phantom Man hands his mask to Barney, as if to say 'You can still try.'"

Who's the Sidekick?

That the mask was passed along to the Masked Man's friend Barney was rather significant, as was just about everything in the role of this rather underrated character. McAllister was different from most sidekicks in comic books in that his views and opinions influenced the entire conception of the Masked Man in Boyer's stories. Each story was from Barney's "writings," he told each one in the first person, and each one opened with an iris shot of Barney looking at the readers and the words "Name's Barney McAllister. I'm a reporter. I cover remarkable phenomena. My friend's name is Dick Carstairs..." etc.

"Barney's introduction is for new readers only," Boyer said. "I picture people reading those two captions for one or two stories. Once they know them, they can go straight to the third caption when they begin a story." At the same time, it was important that Barney be in the story right from the start, for he generally had more to do with each story than the Masked Man did. The frights and meanings generally depended on their meaning from the interpretation Barney put on them.

"The Masked Man is the type of guy who'd jump into a fire to save people, even if the gesture would be useless," Boyer explained. "Barney's the type who would pull him out and explain to him that he'd only be killing himself as well. The Masked Man is a hero, but he would have died as a hero a long time ago if it hadn't been for Barney. Barney is the type of hero that your father is. I mean, your parents never do anything terribly spectacular, but they're always there to help you, to guide you along. Dick may rush off and do something heroic that will get a great deal of publicity, but Barney is much more steady and stable in his heroism. Barney is four feet tall if he's an inch, but this unathletic figure has insight that the nominal hero of the series lacks."

A good example of how this works in practice was the Dan Drekston story, which began in *Eclipse Monthly* #3. Drekston, a veteran reporter, managed to unseat Barney as Dick's faithful companion by offering Dick the chance to collect royalties on merchandise like Masked Man T-shirts and the like.

"The Masked Man wasn't thinking," Boyer said. "He wasn't able to see how those T-shirts and lunch pails were opposed to the sort of heroism that he was supposed to personify. Barney knew what was going on, but he was smart enough to know when to step in and when to sit back. He knew that he couldn't ask Dick to hold off. He can suggest things to Dick, but he can never tell him what to do. Dick finally saw the light in issue #9. I could have had a building or something fall on him to give him perspective, but I figured it was just as important an event if it came about simply through Dick seeing the example Barney set. What comes first to Barney is *people*. And Drekston was really only offering the plastic things to Dick in order to get him to be his friend. Drekston really hadn't had any friends in his life, and that was the only way he knew how to get one."

Barney's potential within the strip was not evident until Boyer began reworking his one-shot creation into a series. "I realized that these stories were only 10 pages. The part of me that likes to tell a good story couldn't tell much of one in that short a space without a lot of captions to give depth to what goes on the panels. But they'd be boring if they just said what was happening, with no emotion on the part of whoever was writing them. As I wrote the stories, Barney became more of an important character to the extent where he's now the foundation of the whole strip. The Masked Man is the star, but Barney is the guiding light."



Herbie, possibly MASKED MAN's most tragic character.

The Swift Sub-Plots

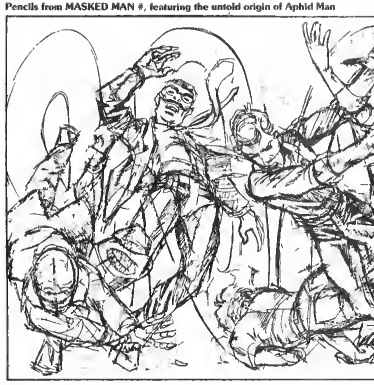
Other characters have dropped in and out of "The Masked Man." Herbie, for example, was introduced in *Eclipse Monthly* #2. Although he acts like a complete mental case, there is more to Herbie than meets the eye.

"He's one of my favorite characters," Boyer said. "Not only because he was one of the first to appear, but because there's a lot more to him than was revealed in the issue he appeared in. I had an idea about doing a story around why a guy would act like that, popping his head out at people all the time. It practically wrote itself once I started. The hardest part of creating Herbie was showing him constantly wearing that weird plastic face. When he dropped it, he didn't look quite like Herbie any more. I had to tell the colorist to keep any mood colors off the character's face at that time, since we needed to keep as little change in his appearance as possible to keep him recognizable to the readers. In future issues, I'll be doing scenes in which Herbie is finally finding someone in his life but it's difficult to think of him doing anything without that crazy face and still being Herbie."

Even less rational than Herbie was "The Amazing Aphidman." Drawn to look like the Peter Parker of the early Steve Ditko issues of *Spider-Man*, Aphidman was a hopelessly un-super-powered high school student who drifted around taking massive amounts of punishment as he attempted to live the life of a super hero.

"And who do you think Aphidman is based on?" Boyer asked. The obvious answer was the wrong one. Boyer got the idea for

Pencils from MASKED MAN #, featuring the untold origin of Aphid Man





Pencils to the splash of MASKED MAN #4, which tells the complete story of Maggie Brown.

the character from the various incarnations of the "coolie" character in Dave Sim's *Cerebus*. He decided to bring a parody character into the circle of characters in the strip, even though Aphidman will become even less of a straight parody and more of a character as things develop.

Interesting developments in Aphidman's home life will be brought out in *Masked Man* #3. "We'll find out where Aphidman comes from," Boyer promised. "His relationship with his father will explain why he goes out at night and tries to act like a superhero. You've met his father already, but didn't know him as such. Issue #3 will resolve the whole Aphidman saga, but I might bring him back some time. I might even put him in a black suit or something."

Boyer pointed out that Ditko and Sim are large influences on his style. A new favorite is Alan Moore, and an issue of *The Masked Man* coming out sometime next year will feature a story inspired by the current *Swamp Thing* run. Before that, Dick will catch up with his current nemesis, the head of a group of "Architectural Terrorists," and the villain will be a "Mr. Rogers" best known in comic-book circles for his proficiency at drawing both architecture and terror. If Boyer is excited by someone else's work, his enthusiasm for it tends to show up in *The Masked Man*.

The fact that Aphidman's situation will soon be resolved is an example of the way in which Boyer writes continuity in his comics. Each Masked Man story is self-contained with running sub-plots. The major difference between Boyer's sub-plots and those in most comics is that Boyer resolves his relatively quickly. "You can't leave your readers dangling on a string forever," Boyer insisted. "The trick is to keep them dangling, but not always on the same string. A lot of people got irritated with *Spider-Man* around the point where the situation Peter Parker was in threatened to go on forever. That will never happen in *The Masked Man*."

A current sub-plot in *The Masked Man* was that of Maggie Brown, who was introduced in the same issue that resolved the Drekston storyline. While Barney was unable to influence the Masked Man, the hero recklessly charged into the scene of a robbery, disregarding the danger to innocent bystanders. In the confusion, a young woman was blinded by a gunshot, and Dick vowed to spend the rest of his life trying to make things up to Maggie Brown for the loss of her eyesight. There may be a wedding. At the same time, Barney will smell a rat, since Maggie's apartment is filled with things only a sighted person could use. The question of whether she was really blind and why she might want to make Dick think she was will be resolved by the fifth issue.

Boyer claims to have written the first 15 issues of *The Masked Man* at this time, and some stories that won't be seen for at least a year or so are currently building up within the strip. An example was given by yronwode. "In the first color 'Masked Man,' a little boy's mother is wounded during the robbery of a bank. There's a beautiful panel in which Dick picks her up and carries her out. It's a wonderful drawing of her looking into his face,



obviously more in love than wounded. I told B.C., 'If I were her, I wouldn't fade away after that had happened. I'd try to stay around the Masked Man.'"

He responded by putting her in a number of stories since then. The woman with blonde hair and wire rimmed glasses, can be seen in various crowd scenes. She also plays a part in *Masked Man* #1, as part of a TV news crew that has been seen covering various Masked Man stories. Boyer promised that eventually her full story will be told, as will that of Myrtle, an old lady usually seen bashing Aphidman over the head with her purse. Other faces in the crowd include Boyer himself, a thinner version of Alfred Hitchcock with a moustache and glasses; and Jon Athens, a newsman who retells the Masked Man's origin in the first issue of the new series. In real life, Athens was the first man to send B.C. Boyer a fan letter.

The longest lived of all *Masked Man* sub-plots involved Frankie, the king of crime that the Masked Man has been after since *Eclipse Magazine* #8. Before the chase is over, even sober Barney will be caught up in Dick's fanatical pursuit of this elusive criminal. The nearest thing to a clue to Frankie was the fact that he's intently interested in something called "The Reggiotorn." Whoever owns it was in for a lot of money, but nobody knows what it was except Frankie.

"Right now it sounds like some type of Italian recipe," Boyer grinned, "but we'll find out more about it gradually."

Frankie himself will appear sometime after the seventh issue, but the mysterious figure is not likely to be what people expect. "I haven't built up all this detail for nothing," Boyer said. The Masked Man and Barney will break into Frankie's organization posing as two criminals named "Big Dick" and "Killer Barney," and will finally come face to face with the boss of bosses. Boyer admitted that he would have introduced Frankie much sooner if the Masked Man still appeared in *Eclipse Magazine*. "I would probably have shown him by the fourth story or so. Then we switched to color, so I felt I had

"I try to surprise the reader. Pull things out of the hat, as it were."



to spread the suspense out a little more to be fair to new readers. Now we're in a brand new book, so I have to keep it going for even more new readers. The whole Frankie thing *will* end eventually, and there's plenty going on in addition to that until then."

Artist with A Brush

Boyer conceived his ideas in a manner unique to comic creators. He has his own cleaning business in Los Angeles, and spends most of his evenings working in empty offices. "I first started thinking of stories while I was waxing floors. I'd get bored and think 'Wouldn't it be great if Spider-Man did this or Superman flew through that.' Eventually, I started coming up with my own characters. I'd grab a scrap of paper off of a desk and write down an idea. I'd start vacuuming more and some dialogue would come to mind, so I'd grab another scrap of paper and write *that* down." Bit by bit, he began to put stories together.

With an idea put together, editor Cat Yronwode entered the picture. "I read the whole story over the phone to Cat," Boyer went on. "Not just telling it to her, but going through it panel-by-panel. She'll give me some ideas, like where a character's entrance might be more effective, or how I should build up to something. After I get her approval, I take my notes and draw the story on bristol board, xerox the pencils and put in the word balloons. It's good to put space in the artwork for the balloons, so the letterer doesn't have to put lines over something in the art."

"Not too many comics are done with the artist sending the editor Xeroxes of the pencils with dialogue added," Yronwode added. "The only other book that we do in that fashion is *Zot!* which also happens to be done by a writer/artist. I edit both the dialogue and the art at the same time. The art is relatively simple to correct. I don't change anything, just circle in red any perspective problems or details I think should be shown more clearly. The average for this is maybe once every four or five pages, so it's not widespread.

"We have a good relationship when it comes to story editing. B.C. considers himself a 'storyteller' rather than a writer, and he was never trained in writing. I tighten up the captions and proofread the grammar and punctuation. Like all writer/artists, he needs to strike a balance between his writing and his art. I think sometimes he'll put too many captions into a draft. His art is so cinematic in terms of the flow from panel to panel that he doesn't need as much copy. After we've discussed any changes over the phone and come to agreement on everything, I send the corrected dialogue to the letterer on the same day that B.C. sends the artwork to her. Then the artwork is returned to B.C. for inking."

Boyer does his own inking, although deadlines have led to guest jobs by Steve Lesaloha and Al Gordon in *Eclipse Monthly* #5 and Gerald Forton in #10. If *The Masked Man* ever want monthly, Boyer would find a permanent inker to help him meet the increased workload. The 20% grey tones that appear in addition to the color in *The Masked Man* were done by Boyer.

"As I saw what was being done in some of the more elaborate comics," Boyer said, "it became my dream to do stories colored in laser scan and the gray tones. We first used them on 'Phantom Man' in *Eclipse* #8, and they should be here to stay."

An Ending With a Moral

Boyer was very happy with the way in which things have turned out for him. His dream of publishing a



black-and-white book went on to become something that he could never have done by himself. "I always read how writers and artists have to struggle before they find the right company," he said. "I hit a good company right off, and I'm grateful. Eclipse is a good place to work for. There's no corporate atmosphere at all."

Eclipse also let Boyer do the type of stories he wanted to do. "I'm influenced a lot by TV shows from the '50s. They always had a good moral for the end of each story that was a good cap for the 30 or so minutes it entertained you. I try to do that in *The Masked Man*, and I'll be able to experiment more now that I have more room for my stories. I'll try a few stories that aren't told by Barney, since there haven't been many like that, and I'll be able to work in action and intricate plotting without having to sacrifice interplay between characters.

"As far as other things go, I'd still like to do *The Incredible Seven*, maybe as a 12-part maxi-series drawn by someone else. What's been seen was just the start of the series, and there's too much good material there to forget. I'm tired of super-powers and super-costumes. These were just a group of teenagers having to face wild situations with whatever they had. The only thing unique about them was that they had a couple of robots along with them." Boyer is also working on a graphic novel inspired by science-fiction of the 1940s.

If B.C. Boyer's work has anything to say to the mainstream comic book market, it's, "You don't have to be super to be interesting." He found the high stakes most heroes play for to be rather overrated. "Most mainstream books," he said, "try to create tension by building up big earth-shaking situations and then asking 'Will the hero live through it?' I think that there's just as much tension in the interaction between two human beings, and it has the advantage of being something real that anyone can understand."

With an interest in people and the sincere conviction that one can hold an audience without having to destroy a planet each issue, B.C. Boyer writes about a romantic who writes about a hero. *The Masked Man* seeks to prove that there is a place in comic books for human interest stories about *human beings*—and that is quite an achievement in itself. ●

ERIC YARBER has previously written about Groo the Wanderer for AH *#61, as well as contributing to the 1985 Preview Issue.*



LONG AGO AND FAR AWAY

A Hero History of the Star Wars comic

One of the challenges of adapting a successful movie into a comic book series is trying to preserve the elements that made the movie successful, and at the same time producing a good comic. The *Star Wars* comic creators were doubly handicapped by the fact that the *Star Wars* movie was an ongoing saga, and all major character development would be limited until the next cinematic installment.

Despite these problems, the *Star Wars* comic has been successful, thanks to the various writers' abilities to craft stories that almost parallelled events of the movies but then veered off before a major confrontation occurred. Another reason for *Star Wars*' success is the high standard that has been maintained in the comic series. Some of the most respected names in comics have contributed to the series: writers Archie Goodwin and Roy Thomas; artists Al Williamson and Carmine Infantino. Further, some of the new wave of fan favorites have also had a hand in the series: Terry Austin, Michael Golden, David Michelinie, Walt Simonson, Gene Day, Bob McLeod, and one man whose contribution cannot be praised too highly, Tom Palmer.

The Cast

Star Wars, the comic, was born under the auspices of Roy Thomas, Howard Chaykin (selected for the project by George Lucas himself), and inkers Steve Leialoha (#2 to #5), and Bill Wray and Rick Hoberg (#6).

Most of the well-known characters were introduced in these first six issues:

Luke Skywalker, the son of a former Jedi Knight, the law enforcers of the galaxy before the evil Empire took over. He inherited the ability to control the Force, an energy field that binds the galaxy together. Jedi Knights could control this Force, which aided them in their duties. Unbeknownst to Luke at the time the series begins, the man he has inherited these abilites from is

Darth Vader, the galactic Empire's main hatchet man. Vader helped the Emperor hunt down and destroy the Jedi Knights, leaving Luke the only hope to free the galaxy.

Princess Leia Organa, a senator and princess from the planet Alderaan. She is secretly Luke Skywalker's sister, a fact unknown until shortly before the Empire's defeat at the Battle of Endor. She may also be able to use the Force but hasn't demonstrated any great aptitude as yet.

Han Solo, a Corellian smuggler and pirate who becomes involved with the rebellion when he is hired by Obi-Wan Kenobi to transport Luke and two droids (robots) to Alderaan. He aids the rebel alliance for a time before signing up as a general shortly before the Battle of Endor.

Chewbacca, Han Solo's best friend and co-pilot of their starship, the *Millenium Falcon*. Chewbacca (Chewie) is a 200-year-old Wookiee, an eight-foot-tall furry animal race.

See Threepio and Artoo Deetoo (C3PO and R2D2), two robots belonging to Luke Skywalker. The droids (short for androids) are extremely loyal and exhibit very human characteristics, so Luke and the others consider them friends, if not equals.



By Ken Boechler



Obi-Wan (ben) Kenobi was the last of the Jedi Knights. He began Luke's instruction in the ways of the Force before being cut down in battle by Darth Vader.

The only other major recurring character in the series, Lando Calrissian, would turn up much later, during the adaptation of *The Empire Strikes Back*. Calrissian was a con-artist friend of Han Solo, and the original owner of the *Millenium Falcon*. He became involved with the rebels when Darth Vader took over the Cloud City of Bespin which he'd been ruling. He betrayed Han to Jabba the Hutt (a gangster based on Luke's home-world of Tatooine) and the remainder of the cast to Darth Vader.

While other characters would pop up and disappear again, the majority of the stories would center on these major characters.

One facet of the *Star Wars* adventures that makes the series a success is the large cast. It allows for bizarre combinations of characters and thus interesting stories. *Star Wars* is truly an *ensemble* comic book. No one character has dominated the action, even though Luke is the "star." Each character has had at least two chances in the limelight, being featured solo or very prominently in some adventure. Not every character appeared in every story, and that offered a variety of story possibilities. It was enjoyable to see characters paired up with partners that they weren't normally associated with: i.e., Luke and Chewie, Leia and Threepio, or Leia and Artoo.

From Star Wars To Empire

For some mysterious reason, the first post-*Star Wars* adventure did not involved conflict with the Empire. Fans who wanted to see further adventures of the rebels versus the Empire were treated to "The Magnificent Seven in Space."

On their way to Tatooine to pay a debt to Jabba the Hutt, Han and Chewie were robbed by another pirate, forcing them to flee to a desert world on the galactic rim. There they got involved with peasant farmers and mercenaries.

While Han and Chewie were tangling with the mercenaries, Luke and the droids were sent out to locate new worlds for the alliance to set up bases on.

Roy Thomas and Howard Chaykin stayed on for the duration of the Han Solo storyline. At this time, Tom Palmer was recruited as inker for his first stint on the book, but it fell to Archie Goodwin, Carmine Infantino, and Terry Austin (some of Austin's earliest work for Marvel) to finish the Luke Skywalker subplot.

While Han and Chewie were leaving their desert world, Luke was crashing on a water-covered world called Drexel, where he became involved in a conflict between boat-dwelling scavengers and a race of marine dragon-riders. By the end of the conflict, the Star Warriors would be reunited, the scavengers crushed, and the pirates that had robbed Han would be defeated.

Meanwhile, some of Han's "Magnificent Seven" found themselves up against Valance, the bounty hunter. Valance was a cyborg, and as such was an outcast. As a result, he hated both himself and, especially, droids (to such an extent that all of his ill-gotten gains went to demolishing hapless droids). He had found out about Luke's friendship with Artoo and Threepio and was determined to end this perversion. Valance was the first memorable addition to the cast.

Following the escape from Drexel, Luke spent an issue reminiscing about his days on Tatooine. Fondly, he remembered his friends Biggs's last day on Tatooine and their conflict with the sand people, the fearsome Tusken raiders.

A little later, Luke decided to practice using the Force and while meditating accidentally contacted Darth Vader. The shock of this contact with a mind so malevolent

Han Solo and his Magnificent Seven—the first post-STAR WARS adventure.



scared him into a coma.

To get medical help, Han rushed Luke to a planet-sized space-station/casino called The Wheel. While on The Wheel, the Star Warriors became pawns in military and political intrigue, romance, and brawling action. At the end of this adventure, Han and Chewie took the *Millenium Falcon* and escaped into hyperspace, while Luke and Leia left in another direction in a stolen space yacht. During the escape, Darth Vader had arrived at The Wheel, searching for the Force-Wielder he had encountered earlier. In his first Force to Force encounter with Vader, Luke shocked the Dark Lordwith a bolt of Force-power and gave our heroes the opportunity to escape. From this raw, undisciplined use of the Force, it was clear that Luke had a long way to go before becoming a Jedi Knight.

Leia spun a tale of Obi-Wan Kenobi's adventures in the old republic in the next issue (#26).

Following their escape from The Wheel, Luke and Leia traded their yacht for another ship so that they couldn't be traced back to the rebel base (on Yavin's fourth moon).

When they finally reached the Yavin base, they faced an Imperial scheme to constantly bomb Yavin base by hiding their fighters in the center of the gas-giant Yavin. Heading this project was Baron Orman Tagge, an Imperial noble who would bedevil the rebels for the next two years. Tagge was notable for carrying a lightsaber with which he practiced constantly. He and his family had a vendetta against Darth Vader, and he hoped someday to gain revenge.

In the process of foiling Tagge's scheme, Artoo Deetoo was severely damaged. The rebel base being unable to repair him, Luke and Threepio went after the necessary components, only to come face to face with Valance. In a touching moment, Threepio offered to sacrifice himself so Luke could escape. In a verbal confrontation, Threepio pleaded the case for human-droid friendship. Valance, astounded, let them go with the components needed to repair Artoo.

Meanwhile, Han and Chewie had a standoff with Jabba the Hutt on some unspecified planet. Evidently the standoff had been going on for some time, because Han and Chewie were running short on supplies. Eventually, they won out and got Jabba to cancel Han's debt—and pay them a little something as well.

Marvel would probably like to forget that this adventure ever occurred. Their Jabba was a yellow-skinned bipedal alien both in issue #2 and in this story. Lucas would excise this Jabba from the final print of *Star Wars* and no one expected the slobbering worm of *Return of the Jedi* (then still three years in the future).

Darth Vader, meanwhile, had located the pilot that had fled Yavin prior to the *Death Star*'s approach. This pilot knew everything about Luke that Vader needed to know. The only thing that Vader wasn't expecting was having to go through Valance to get to the pilot. Luke and Threepio had affected Valance deeply, and Valance was determined to keep Luke safe from Vader. In a moving scene, Valance sacrificed himself to keep Vader from learning Luke's identity.

Meanwhile (there was a lot going on at the same time) Leia had been sent to a bleak industrial world where she presented herself as a symbol of hope to the populace. Unfortunately, Baron Tagge was there as well, and Leia had to escape his clutches to escape the planet.

Sometime later, Luke and the droids returned to Tattoine to recruit new pilots for the rebel alliance. He entered the cantina and got involved in a barroom brawl instigated by his old friends, Han and Chewie. While on Tatooine, they encountered Baron Tagge's new scheme—the Omega Frost. This device froze solid anything that was caught between its transmitter towers. In the course of the adventure, Luke easily defeated Baron Tagge in a light-saber duel and the *Millenium Falcon* led the entire rebel fleet





Leia, a la Chaykin and a la Golden.

against Baron Tagge's fleet.

After months of searching, Darth Vader finally learned who Luke was and set out to trap him. Leia, Han, and Chewie. Along the way Luke developed a crush on Tagge's

From Walt Simonson's debut as the regular STAR WARS artist. Inks by Tom Palmer.



youngest sister, Domina. Domina Tagge had been turned against Luke by Vader and she now schemed to destroy both Vader and Luke. Eventually, Luke and Vader came face to face, but Luke escaped before they came to blows.

The next issue was to begin the *The Empire Strikes Back* adaptation, but instead turned out to be a fill-in by fan favorites Michael Golden and Terry Austin. This excellently-drawn story featured Luke and Leia's encounter with a living starship.

From the Empire To Jedi

The Empire Strikes Back was adapted in *Star Wars* #39 to #45. This sequence was one of the high points of the series in both art and story. A problem, however, was that the art was prepared for the higher production values of the *Marvel Super Special*, and when transferred to newsprint it became murky, particularly in the scenes with Darth Vader. Regular readers were also undoubtably surprised at the sudden transition to *Empire* without explanation of how, when, or why the rebel base had been moved to Hoth.

Fortunately, Al Williamson and Archie Goodwin decided to fill in the missing months in the daily *Star Wars* newspaper strip they were doing. The newspaper strip explained many mysteries and tied up loose ends, such as the birth of Vader's ship *Executor*, what happened to General Dodonna, and why the move to Hoth. Once can only hope that Marvel will someday publish these stories to fill in the missing months. There have been rumors of this possibility.

Actually, there was a small attempt at transition in issue #37, where Han and Chewie's encounter with a bounty hunter sent them to join the rebels.

Following the traumatic events of *Empire*, Luke went on a patrol to clear his head and wound up tangling with a super-probe-droid.

Lando and Chewie meanwhile were searching for Boba Fett and encountered a religious cultist named Cody Sunn-Childe.

Leia, on the other hand, had her hands full trying to secure a loan so that the rebels could purchase more armaments. With Artoo and Threepio she managed to get the loan despite Darth Vader's attempts to stop them permanently. This was Carmine Infantino's swan song on the book.

The next issue (#49) marked Walt Simonson's debut as penciller on the book. His first task was to chronicle Luke and Leia's encounter with a misshappen creature named Jeddidiah, who taught Luke a few things about prejudice and not judging a man by his looks.



Luke meets Yoda, from the EMPIRE STRIKES BACK adaptation.

This issue also marked Tom Palmer's return to the book as inker. Tom Palmer's contribution to *Star Wars* cannot be overstated. While the creative teams have changed several times, he has remained the inker, maintaining the "look" of the series. He contributed what George Lucas reportedly felt was lacking: a realistic look and feel to the artwork—something absent from Carmine Infantino's highly stylized work.

Star Wars has become a showcase of sorts for Palmer's work. He has contributed inks to most of the stories, has demonstrated his proficiency with the pencils on a few stories, and contributed three cover paintings to various issues. His painting for the first post-*Jedi* story (#81) was beautiful and enormously popular with the fans. *Star Wars*'s consistent quality artwork can be attributed directly to this man's efforts.

Star Wars #50 was Archie Goodwin's last, but he went out in high style. A Tom Palmer painting led off a special anniversary tale which contained a Han Solo flashback, all the other principals, Luke's old crush Domina Tagge, and the Empire bounty hunters. Splendid artwork by Williamson, Simonson, and Palmer made this a truly special 50th issue.

David Michelinie took over the writing duties in the next issue and he captured the *Star Wars* flavor immediately. The Empire was building the *Death Star*'s ion-cannon into a new battleship named the *Tarkin*, Luke, Leia, Chewie, and the droids were sent to destroy it. Lando also volunteered, but Leia snubbed him because of what he'd done to Han on Bespin. Vader was, of course, overseeing the construction. Besides having to deal with the rebels, he had to quell a revolt by his generals.

It is reported that Lucasfilm had this plot changed. Originally Michelinie had used a new *Death Star* instead of the *Tarkin*. Since that parallelled events in *Return of the Jedi*, it was vetoed.

On their next mission, Leia was forced down on a planet where she got involved with a "John Carter of Mars" type character who was fighting the Empire. The two issues this story covers were written by *X-Men* writer Chris Claremont, and their Burroughs-type style was no coincidence: these stories were originally prepared for the *John Carter of Mars* comic and adapted into *Star Wars* stories when that comic was cancelled!

After months of searching, the rebels finally located Arbra, a planet they could use as a base. They and the native aliens, rabbit-

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THE COMICS BUYER'S GUIDE
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An old Warlord of Mars story is published off for STAR WARS.

like creatures called Hoojibs, soon became allies.

Once the Arbra base had been set up, Lando chose to return to Bespin to find out what had happened to "his" city. Returning, he found that the Empire had kicked the Ugnauts (inhabitants of Bespin working in the city) down to the surface. This story introduced another love interest for Luke, a rebel cadet named Shira Brie. Shira joined Luke to rescue Lando from the Imperial general who had taken over Bespin.

Upon their return from Bespin, the three got involved in helping hide the fleet in the center of Arbra's sun. There was a malfunction and it fell to Artoo and Threepio to fix it and save the fleet from incineration.

The rebel command then discovered that the Empire was transporting a creature that would permit instantaneous communication throughout the galaxy. To stop this, they sent Luke, Lando, and Chewie to an unscrupulous dealer to purchase some TIE fighters (which would be disguised as Imperial TIE fighters).

Upon their return to Arbra with the fighters, Shira told Luke that she had to return to her home planet for a memorial service dedicated to her people, all slain by the Empire. Luke and two other pilots (one looking like a caricature of Walt Simonson) accompanied her home and they wound up tangling with hostile natives.

Following this detour they carried out the plan to intercept and destroy the Imperial convoy transporting the communication-creature. During the battle, the Force informed Luke that an enemy pilot was bearing down on him. Luke dutifully destroyed the ship only to discover later that it was Shira that he had destroyed. (The rebels were attacking in disguised TIE fighters, so it was difficult to recognize friends and enemies.)

Luke was kicked out of the rebel command and told he would stand trial for treason. Not believing the Force could deceive him, he set out to find the truth. With Chewie's help he discovered that the memorial ceremony had been an act. Shira was actually an Imperial agent who had framed Luke to weaken the rebel alliance. Luke and Chewie then flew to the Imperial Personnel Office to get data proving Shira a spy. Shira, meanwhile, had survived Luke's attack and was recovering in an Imperial healing tank.

Upon his return to the Arbra base, Luke presented the data tape in his defense and was promptly reinstated to his former rank of commander. He then led a rebel attack group to destroy a former base (last seen in *Star Wars* #50). It seems the rock of the base had the capacity to store images of anything that occured on the planet. The Empire had discovered this property and was determined to keep the base intact until they could get all of the rebel's secrets. Leia went into the base alone to plant the charges that blew up the base and battled the Imperial general in charge of safeguarding the base. She escaped at the last second and the rebel task force headed for home, except for Luke. His hyperspace drive had been damaged. He was forced to land on a nearby planet and while evading his pursuers got involved with a young female moisture farmer's battle with a greedy water baron. This issue was pencilled by Tom Palmer.

Eventually Luke made it back to the Arbra base where plans were being made to search for Han Solo. Chewbacca, the droids, and a couple of Hoojibs got sidetracked and battled an ancient sorceror in the bowels of Arbra. This issue was a great example of the flexibility of the large cast. None of the protagonists was a normal human.

Gene Day's tenure (only issues #68 and #69) on the book began with the start of the search for Han Solo. This was his second stint on the book, the first being as one of the many inkers over Carmine Infantino's pencils. Day's innovative panel designs made the artwork some of the best of the entire series and a joy to read.

To search for Han Solo, the Star Warriors split into three groups, each searching for one of the bounty hunters that had assisted Boba Fett in finding Han Solo.

Leia and Threepio searched out the bounty hunter named Dengar, who was in the custody of a Boba Fett lookalike named Fenn Shysa. Fenn, unlike Fett, was a good guy and helped Leia capture Dengar, who didn't know anything.

After writing a fill-in (#70) Mary Jo Duffy became permanent (and current) writer. With the next issue, Ron Frenz took over layouts, with Palmer still doing finished.

Luke and Artoo discovered that their quarry had joined up with Lando and Chewie's quarry, so the four joined forces. While searching for I.G. 88 and Bossk, the searchers tangled with a bumbling pirate crew cut from the same cloth as Han Solo, the Rik Duel gang. Rik Duel and his female companion Dani were searching for the bounty hunters as well because they had the third member of the gang, Chihdo, on ice in a block of carbonite.

The search for Han Solo was then derailed by the alliance brass who needed the Star Warriors to locate some missing rebel pilots and some data tapes that would prove to contain information on the new *Death Star*'s location and weaknesses.

The Star Warriors were reunited and their first try led to the discovery of a hilltop Imperial fortress. Dani developed a crush on Luke, and left Rik Duel to go along for the trip. In a hilarious series of misadventures Leia and Dani tried to breach the fortress and get the tapes. Luke managed to rescue them at the last second. Unfortunately, these tapes only gave clues to where the really important tapes were.

The search for the data tapes and the pilot who'd obtained them, Tay Vanis, continued on a water-covered world. The Star Warriors split into two groups, one of which became a pawn in the schemes of an overly ambitious Imperial general, while the other became involved in civil strife beneath the waves. Luke and Leia got caught in the civil war while Lando, Chewie, Artoo, and Threepio were captured by the Empire forces on a neighboring planet. Artoo managed to rescue his partners and they returned to the waterworld to pick up Luke and Leia.

These two later continued the search at a high government dinner party and got involved in another funny series of misadventures brought on by bumbling assassins murder attempt on a local official.

Lando and Chewie meanwhile continued the search for Han Solo and discovered that he was being held in Jabba's palace on Tatooine.

Luke and Leia in the meantime had finally located Tay Vanis, who unfortunately had been turned into a mindless vegetable by Vader. Vader left behind a holographic message in which he gloated about his victory. The rebels eventually obtained the tapes from Vanis's droid. The stage was now set for a final confrontation with the Empire, following a side trip to Tatooine to get Han Solo.

Jedi and Beyond

The artwork and the script of the *Return of the Jedi* adaptation was again handled by Al Williamson and Archie Goodwin. This time, to prevent an abrupt transition as the one before Empire, *Jedi* was published separately in a mini-series allowing the regular scripter, Jo Duffy, to tie up loose ends and dovetail her plots into *Return of the Jedi*'s plot.

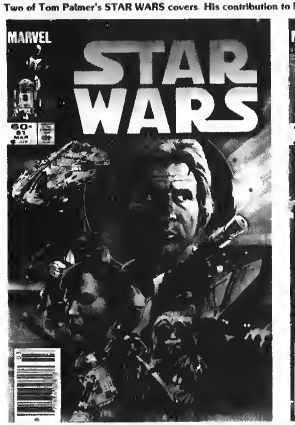
As a result the transition issues to the *Jedi* plotline were published several months after the final adaptation issue appeared. The artwork of the newsprint comic again suffered from murkiness due to differences in the printing process.

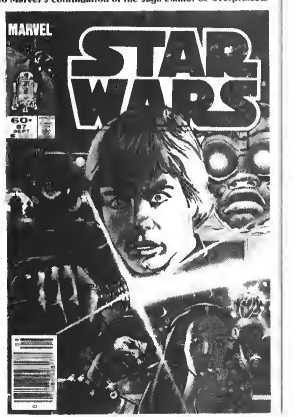
Following the party celebrating the victory over the Empire (#81), Han Solo decided to get on with his life and catch up on time lost while in hibernation. The first order of business was to get money. He went to his bank on Tatooine, but discovered that he was considered dead and his assets were frozen (a little irony there). While on Tatooine, Leia, Han, and Artoo tangled with evil Jawas and a resurrected Boba Fett (he'd apparently died in *Return of the Jedi*).

Meanwhile, back on Endor, the rebel leaders decided to try to recruit representatives from other worlds to join together and form a government to replace the Empire. The Star Warriors became the prime recruiters for the cause. Luke travelled back to the water-world he'd visited a few weeks earlier during the search for Tay Vanis but recruited only one volunteer. This merman, named Kiro, has joined the Star Wars cast. Unfortunately, he has to live in a fishbowl full of water in order to breathe.

While Luke was recruiting mermen, Lando tried to convince some old friends of his, royalty on a feudal planet, to join the cause. He

Two of Tom Palmer's STAR WARS covers. His contribution to Marvel's continuation of the saga cannot be overpraised.







then got involved in some political and court intrigue which resulted in the monarchy's overthrow. Bob McLeod took over pencils with this issue. So far the recruiting was not going well.

Han and Chewie were up to their old gambling tricks and not doing any recruiting at all. They wound up on a quest for magic crystals and ended up saving a world and tangling with the Empire (which finally reared its head for the first time following the Battle of Endor).

A little later back on Endor, the first meeting to build a new republic was held. There were apparently not enough recruits, so Mon Mothma and Admiral Ackbar set about getting a few more. Han, Lando, and Chewie volunteered for one mission because it involved Dreeble, an old acquaintance of Lando's who was getting credit for his good deeds.

Leia's first recruiting mission saw her shot down by the Empire and entering into an uneasy alliance with an Imperial stormtrooper who had been a palace servant on Alderaan. Sadly, this survivor of Alderaan died at the hands of the Empire while helping Princess Leia escape.

Luke hadn't been twiddling his thumbs either. He had picked up the Rik Duel gang as travelling companions on his mission to find recruits. Unfortunately the light-fingered bunch, while attempting to pillage and plunder, set off a doomsday device that would have destroyed the universe. The combined efforts of Luke and Kiro saved everything in the nick of time.

Leia, Mon Mothma, and the droids set off on a new mission. They quickly discovered that the Empire was as active and powerful as ever, but a power struggle to decide who would lead it was underway. Leia also encountered a female dressed in leather armor and breathscreen a la Darth Vader. There are hints that this woman, named Lumiya, is vying for the mantle of the Dark Lord. She has not resurfaced, yet she is potentially a powerful antagonist. There is also evidence (and rumors) that Lumiya is really Shira Brie.

Luke in the meantime tried to recruit yet another planet into the new alliance and wound up in the middle of a struggle between peasant rebels and their king.

A short time later, everyone was reunited on Endor. Luke brought along Rik Duel and his cohorts because he didn't want them anywhere he couldn't keep an eye on them. Leia also returned but was troubled by a decision she had to make. She was trying to decide whether to be a diplomat as her training as a senator had taught her, or a fighter as a leader of the rebel alliance. As yet Leia's choice hasn't been made, but the rebel leaders decided that since the principal Star Warriors didn't take part in the first alliance-forming meeting, they wouldn't be allowed to help govern. The Star Warriors were occupied keeping Rik Duel and his gang out of trouble, and Han and Chewie went back to Chewie's homeworld to see his family. The two, followed by Lando, broke up a slave trade ring on the Wookiees' world (#91).

This, then, brings the chronicles up to date with the exception of a few unremarkable fill-in issues and three annuals.

Joe Brozowski and Vince Colletta drew a bizarre fill-in that featured Luke's encounted with a medieval tyrant who could only be removed by being defeated in a joust (#64).

Kerry Gammill and Tom Palmer shared the pencilling on the Rik Duel gang's introductory adventure in issue #70.

David Michelinie, Luke McDonnell, and Bob Layton chronicled the story of Wedge, a friend of Luke's who'd disappeared during the Imperial invasion of Hoth (#78).

The Han Solo/Chewbacca duel in #84 was written by Roy Richardson and drawn by David Mazzucchelli.



A panel from STAR WARS #64, a strange story in which Luke encounters a medieval-type tyrant.

The first annual featured the Star Warriors' encounter with bird-people with an affinity for the Force and a hatred for Correllians. The second was an annual only because it featured an extra-long Han Solo story which was published in the interval between *Empire* and *Jedi*.

The third was a powerful story by Duffy and Klaus Janson, detailing the effects of the war on the common people of the galaxy. Two friends were parted by the war, one joined Luke Skywalker as a possible apprentice, the other went to Darth Vader as a stormtrooper lackey. A sequel is planned.

The Future

The future of the *Star Wars* adventures depends on what George Lucas has in mind. There are rumors that the first trilogy is about to begin production. If this is true, Luke and company's days may be numbered, since the further adventures will chronicle the adventures of Obi-Wan, Anakin Skywalker, and the events before *Star Wars*.

Anyhow, it appears that Rik Duel, Chihdo, and Dani have joined for the duration.

Boba Fett may have survived, and the would-be new Dark Lord, Lumiya is still around. The Empire is there to provide a constant threat. There are still plenty of battles yet to be fought.

So it is too early to tell is the series can survive the loss of a nemesis of Darth Vader's calibre. Fett and Lumiya could fit the bill if handled properly, but with the adventures of Luke Skywalker at an end in the movies, it is possible that interest in the book will wane. We're going to find out. ●

This is KEN BOECHLER's first article for **AMAZING HEROES.**

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THE GOLDEN AGE DIRECTORY

Installment 1: Air Wave to Batman

Ever wonder where you could get your hands on a reprint of a specific 1940s super-hero in a sea of comic book reprints? Or ponder which Golden Age comic book was the source for an unsourced reprint. Well, wonder no more. We have the answers, and we shall provide.

This issue, we begin a regular column devoted to indexing reprints of Golden Age super-hero and costumed-hero strips from 1938-1955. Everybody from Air Wave to Zoro the Mystery Man is contained herein, and we'll be tracking them down installment by installment in each issue of **AMAZING HEROES**.

The whole shebang is organized alphabetically by hero. Each entry consists of three parts. 1) The original comic book from which a story was reprinted; 2) The books in which it was reprinted; and 3) The story title and page length. If the story was untitled in the original, we have supplied our own homemade title, in which case it will be in brackets, like so: ["The Coming of Aquaman"].

A few words about the reprint entries before we begin: *Flashback* and *Comic Reprints* were both photographic reproductions of an entire Golden Age comic book, and are still available from many dealers and at conventions. The *Golden Age Review*, similarly, was one of two late-'70s books which reprinted-by-photograph a double handful of tales of second-string super-heroes. *Captain George Presents* and *Captain George's World* were both handled by George Henderson and printed on newsprint—harder to come by these days, but included for the sake of completeness. IW/Supers, like *The Avenger*, are included, and the *Valkyrie!* book, a nice volume indeed, is still available from Ken Pierce.

On to the index!

AIR WAVE

Detective Comics #66, Aug. 1942
(*Superman* #245, Dec. 1971/Jan. 1972)
"Adventure of the Shooting Spooks" —7 pp.

Detective Comics #68, June 1944
(*World's Finest Comics* #212, June 1972)
"Underworld Jam Session"—6 pp.

AIRBOY

Air Fighters Comics V. 1 #2, Nov. 1942
(*Comic Reprints*, Oklahoma)
["The Origin of Airboy"]—13 pp.

Air Fighters Comics V. 2 #2, Nov. 1943
(*Valkyrie!*, Ken Pierce, 1981)
(*Golden Age of Comics* #4, Sept. 1963)
["Airboy Meets Valkyrie"]—13 pp.

Air Fighters Comics V. 2 #7, Apr. 1944
(*Valkyrie!*, Ken Pierce, 1981)
["The Death Lights"]—13 pp.

Airboy Comics V. 2 #12, Jan. 1946
(*Golden Age Review*, 1978)
(*Valkyrie!*, Ken Pierce, 1981)
["The Return of Misery"]—13 pp.

Airboy Comics V. 3 #6, July 1946
(*Valkyrie!*, Ken Pierce, 1981)
"An American Legend"—13 pp.

Airboy Comics V. 3 #12, Jan. 1947
(*Valkyrie!*, Ken Pierce, 1981)
"The Wind of Battle"—22 pp.
(Note: This story guest stars Skywolf.)

AJAX THE SUN MAN

Doc Savage Comics #6, Nov. 1941
(*Golden Age of Comics* #6, Nov. 1963)
["The Rocket Bomber]"—10 pp.

ALFRED

Batman #22, Apr.-May 1944
(*Batman* #257, July-Aug. 1974)
"Conversational Clue" —4 pp.

Batman #24, Aug.-Sept 1944
(*Detective Comics* #421, Mar. 1972)
"Police Line-Up" —4 pp.

By PETER LUST, STEVE JOHNSON, and LOU MOUGIN

Batman #26, Dec. 1944/Jan. 1945
(*Batman Family* #9, Jan.-Feb. 1977)
"Recipe for Revenge"—4 pp.

Batman #27, Feb.-Mar. 1945
(*Batman* #260, Jan.-Feb. 1975)
"The Pearl of Peril"—4 pp.

Batman #28, Apr.-May 1945
(*Batman Family* #1, Sept.-Oct. 1975)
"The Great Handcuff King"—4 pp.

Batman #31, Oct.-Nov. 1945
(*Detective Comics* #417, Nov. 1971)
(*Best of DC* #2, Nov.-Dec. 1979)
"Alfred, Armchair Detective"—4 pp.

Batman #32, Dec. 1945/Jan. 1946
(*Batman Family* #6, July-Aug. 1976)
"In the Soup"—4 pp.

ALIAS THE SPIDER

Crack Comics #25, Sept. 1942
(*Detective Comics* #441, June-July 1974)
["The Secret of Mouse Malone"]—6 pp.

ALL-WINNERS SQUAD

All-Winners Comics #19, Fall 1946
(*Fantasty Masterpieces* #10, Aug. 1967)
"The Crime of the Ages"—43 pp.

All-Winners Comics #21, Winter 1946-47
(*Marvel Super-Heroes* #17 and #18, Nov. 1968 and Jan. 1969)
"Menace From the Future World"—43 pp.

THE ANGEL

All-Winners Comics #1, Summer 1941
(*Flashback* #23, Dynapubs)
"Case of the Mad Gargoyle"—12 pp.

Marvel Mystery Comics #4, Feb. 1940
(*Flashback* #26, Dynapubs)
["The Creature"]—6 pp.

Marvel Mystery Comics #41, Mar. 1943
(*Captain George Presents* #30)
(*Captain George's World* #23 and #24)
"The Curse of Baron Trembiew"—10 pp.

Sub-Mariner #1, Spring 1941
(*Flashback* #19, Dynapubs)
["The House of Horror"]—20 pp.

AQUAMAN

Adventure Comics #203, Aug. 1954
(*Super DC Giant* #S-26, July-Aug. 1971)
"The Shark with the Human Brain"—6 pp.

More Fun Comics #73, Nov. 1941
(*Secret Origins* #7, Oct.-Nov. 1974)
["The Coming of Aquaman"]—8 pp.

THE ATOM

All-American Cmics #19, Oct. 1940
(*Secret Origins of the Super DC Heroes*, 1976)
"Introducing the Mighty Atom"—6 pp.

All-American Comics #24, Mar. 1941
(*Flashback* #30, Dynapubs)
["The Shakedown Racket"]—6 pp.

Flash Comics #90, Dec. 1947
(*DC 100-Page Super Spectacular* #DC-18, July 1973)
"Murder on a Star"—5 pp.

Flash Comics #98, Aug. 1948
(*Justice League of America* #99, June 1972)
"Death Rides the Rails"—5 pp.

[Unpublished Golden Age story]
(*Batman* #236, Jan. 1972)
"Danger in the Totem's Eye"—6 pp.

The most reprinted Batman story ever.



THE AVENGER

The Avenger #1, Feb.-Mar. 1955
(*The Avenger* #9, 1964)
"The Fog Robbers"
"Death Has Three Faces"
"The Red Hand of Terror"
"The Birth of the Avenger!"

BALBO, BOY MAGICIAN

America's Greatest Comics #7, Apr. 28, 1943
(*Flashback* #32, Dynapubs)
"The Missing Rabbit"—10 pp.

THE BALD EAGLE

Air Fighters Comics V. 1 #2, Nov. 1942
(*Comic Reprints*, Oklahoma)
["The Lifeless Invaders"]—7 pp.

BATMAN

Batman #1, Spring 1940
(*Famous First Edition* #F-5, Dec. 1974/Jan. 1975)
["The Coming of the Cat"]—13 pp.
["The Giants of Hugo Strange"]—13 pp.
"The Joker Returns"—13 pp.
(*The Great Comic Book Heroes*, Feiffer, 1965)
(*Batman From the Thirties to the Seventies*, 1971)
(*Famous First Edition* #F-5, Dec. 1974/Jan. 1975)
"The Joker"
(*The Great Comic Book Heroes*, Feiffer, 1965)
(*Batman*, Signet, 1966)
(*Batman From the Thirties to the Seventies*, 1971)
(*Famous First Edition* #F-5, Dec. 1974/Jan. 1975)
(*Secret Origins of the Super DC Heroes*, 1976)
(*Crawford's Encyclopedia of Comic Books*, 1979)
"The Legend of the Batman—Who He Is and How He Came to Be"—2 pp.
NOTE: This story, possibly the most reprinted super-hero story in comics history, is itself mostly a reprint from *Detective Comics* #33, Nov. 1939.

Batman #4, Winter 1940-41
(*Limited Collector's Edition* #C-25, 1974)
"Case of the Joker's Crime Circus"—13 pp.

Batman #5, Spring 1941
(*Batman* #241, May 1972)
"Case of the Honest Crook"—13 pp.

Batman #7, Oct.-Nov. 1941
(*Batman* #242, June 1972)
(*Best of DC* #2, Nov.-Dec. 1979)
"The People Vs. the Batman"—13 pp.

Batman #8, Dec. 1941/Jan. 1942
(*Limited Collector's Edition* #C-37, Aug.-Sept. 1974)
"The Cross-Country Crimes"—13 pp.

Batman #12, Aug.-Sept. 1942
(*Batman* #256, May-June 1974)
"Brothers in Crime"—13 pp.

Batman #14, Dec. 1942/Jan. 1943
(*Limited Collector's Edition* #C-25, 1974)
"The Case Batman Failed to Solve"—13 pp.

Batman #15, Feb.-Mar. 1943
(*Batman* #239, Feb. 1972)
"The Loneliest Men in the World"—13 pp.

Batman #16, Apr.-May 1943
(*Batman* #260, Jan.-Feb. 1975)
"The Grade-A Crimes"—13 pp.
(*Batman* #213, July-Aug. 1969)
(*Batman From the Thirties to the Seventies*, 1971)
"Here Comes Alfred"—13 pp.

Batman #20, Dec. 1943/Jan. 1944
(*Batman Family* #10, Mar.-Apr. 1977)
"Bruce Wayne Loses the Guardianship of Dick Grayson"—9 pp.

Batman #22, Apr.-May 1944
(*Batman* #255, Mar.-Apr. 1974)
"The Duped Domestics"—12 pp.

Batman #24, Aug.-Sept. 1944
(*Limited Collector's Edition* #C-25, 1974)
"The Mayors of Yonville"—12 pp.

Batman #25, Oct.-Nov. 1944
(*Wanted* #2, Sept.-Oct. 1972)
"Knights of Knavery"—12 pp.

Batman #26, Dec. 1944/Jan. 1945
(*Batman* #258, Sept.-Oct. 1974)
"Twenty Ton Robbery"—12 pp.
(*Batman Family* #3, Jan.-Feb. 1976)
"The Year 3000"—13 pp.

Batman #27, Feb.-Mar. 1945
(*Batman* #261, Mar.-Apr. 1975)
(*The Best of DC* #22, Mar. 1982)
"A Christmas Peril"—12 pp.

Batman #29, June-July 1945
(*Batman* #259, Nov.-Dec. 1974)
"Heroes by Proxy"—11 pp.

Batman #30, Aug.-Sept. 1945
(*Batman* #257, July-Aug. 1974)
"Ally Babble and the Fourteen Peeves"—12 pp.
(*Batman* #236, Nov. 1971)
"While the City Sleeps"—12 pp.

Batman #31, Oct.-Nov. 1945
(*Limited Collector's Edition* #C-44, June-July 1976)
"Trade Marks of Crime"—12 pp.
(*Detective Comics* #442, Aug.-Sept. 1974)
"Vanishing Village"—11 pp.

Batman #32, Dec. 1945
(*Batman* #257, July-Aug. 1974)
"Rackety-Rax Racket"—12 pp.

Batman #35, June-July 1946
(*Batman* #256, May-June 1974)
"Dinosaur Island"—12 pp.
(*Lois Lane* #123, June 1972)
"Nine Lives Has the Catwoman"—12 pp.

Batman #38, Dec. 1946/Jan. 1947
(*Detective Comics* #441, June-July 1974)
"The Carbon Copy Crimes"—11 pp.

Batman #42, Aug.-Sept 1947
(*3-D Batman*, 1953)

(3-D Batman, 1966)
"The Robot Robbers"—13 pp.

Batman #43, Oct.-Nov. 1947
(Limited Collector's Edition #C-37, Aug.-Sept. 1975)
"The Blackbirds of Banditry"—12 pp.

Batman #45, Feb.-Mar. 1948
(Limited Collector's Edition #C-37, Aug.-Sept. 1975)
"The Lady Rogues"—12 pp.

Batman #47, June-July 1948
(Batman #198, Jan.-Feb. 1968)
(Batman From the Thirties to the Seventies, 1971)
(Secret Origins of the Super DC Heroes, 1976)
"The Origin of the Batman"—13 pp.

Batman #48, Aug.-Sept. 1948
(3-D Batman, 1953)
(3-D Batman, 1966)
"The Fowls of Fate"—11 pp.
(Batman #203, July-Aug. 1968)
(Best of DC #2, Nov.-Dec. 1979)
"The 1,000 Secrets of the Batcave"—12 pp.

Batman #52, Apr.-May 1949
(Batman #193, July-Aug. 1967)
"Batman and the Vikings"—12 pp.

Batman #55, Oct.-Nov. 1949
(Batman #198, Jan.-Feb. 1968)
"The Bandit of the Bells"—12 pp.

Batman #56, Dec. 1949/Jan. 1950
(Batman #193, July-Aug. 1967)
"Ride, Bat-Hombre, Ride"—13 pp.

Batman #61, Oct.-Nov. 1950
(Batman #203, July-Aug. 1968)
"The Birth of Batplane II"—12 pp.

Batman #62, Dec. 1950/Jan. 1951
(Batman #208, Jan.-Feb. 1969)
(Limited Collector's Edition #C-45, June-July 1976)
"Secret Life of the Catwoman"—12 pp.

Batman #67, Oct.-Nov. 1951
(Batman From the Thirties to the Seventies, 1971)
"The Man Who Wrote the Joker's Jokes"—12 pp.

Batman #68, Dec. 1951/Jan. 1952)
(Batman Annual #3, Summer, 1962)
(Batman From the Thirties to the Seventies, 1971)
"The New Crimes of Two-Face"—10 pp.

Batman #70, Apr.-May 1952
(Batman #238, Jan. 1972)
"The Masterminds of Crime"—12 pp.
(Batman #176, Dec. 1965)
(Batman Vs. the Penguin, 1966)
"The Parasols of Plunder"—12 pp.

Batman #72, Aug.-Sept. 1952
(Batman #233, July 1971)
"The Death Cheaters of Gotham City"—12 pp.
(Batman Annual #2, 1961)
"The Jungle Batman"—12 pp.

Batman #73, Oct.-Nov. 1952
(Batman #176, Dec. 1965)
"The Joker's Utility Belt"—12 pp.

(Batman #203, Jan. 1969)
"Vicki Vale's Secret"—10 pp.

Batman #74, Dec. 1952/Jan. 1953
(Batman, Signet, 1966)
"The Crazy Crime Clown"—10 pp.

Batman #75, Feb.-Mar. 1953
(Batman Annual #3, Summer 1962)
(Super Heroes Vs. Super Gorillas #1, Winter 1976)
"The Gorilla Boss of Gotham City"—12 pp.
(Batman #238, Jan. 1972)
"Mr. Roulette's Greatest Gamble"—10 pp.
(Batman #228, Jan. 1971)
"Outlaw Town, U.S.A."—10 pp.

Batman #76, Apr.-May 1953
(Batman Annual #6, Winter 1963-64)
"The Danger Club"—10 pp.
(Batman Vs. the Penguin, 1966)
"The Penguin's Fabulous Fowls"—10 pp.

Batman #77, June-July 1953
(Batman, Signet, 1966)
(Batman From the Thirties to the Seventies, 1971)
"The Crime Predictor"—10 pp.

Batman #78, Aug.-Sept. 1953
(Batman #223, July 1970)
"Batman of the Mounties"—10 pp.

Batman #79, Oct.-Nov. 1953
(80 Page Giant #5, Dec. 1964)
"The Bride of Batman"—10 pp.

Batman #81, Feb. 1954
(Batman #185, Oct. 1966)
"The Boy Wonder Confesses"—10 pp.
(Batman From the Thirties to the Seventies, 1971)
(Comic: A History, 1971)
"Two-Face Strikes Again"—10 pp.

Batman #82, Mar. 1954
(Batman #193, July-Aug. 1967)
"The Flying Batman"—10 pp.
(Batman, Signet, 1966)
"The Man Who Could Change Fingerprints"—10 pp.

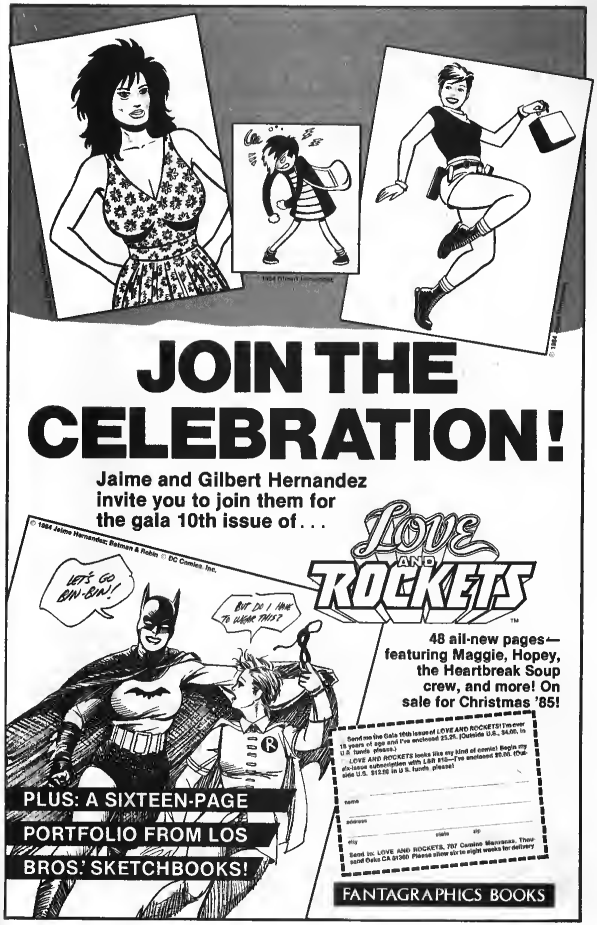
Batman #83, Apr. 1954
(Batman #228, Jan. 1971)
"The Duplicate Batman"—10 pp.
(Batman, Signet, 1966)
"The Testing of Batman"—10 pp.

Batman #84, June 1954
(Batman Vs. the Penguin, 1966)
"The Sleeping Beauties of Gotham City"—10 pp.

Batman #85, Aug. 1954
(Batman #182, July-Aug. 1966)
(Batman Vs. the Joker, 1966)
"Batman, Clown of Crime"—10 pp.
(Batman #254, Jan.-Feb. 1974)
"The Guardian of the Bat-Signal"—10 pp.

NEXT ISSUE

Batman to Black Canary



DC'S TEN WHO COULD DO BETTER

by Johnny Carruthers

In *Amazing Heroes* #25, Thomas Long presented a list of "Ten Who Could Do Better." In that article, Mr. Long listed 10 Marvel second-string characters that could, given the right opportunity, probably move up to the first team.

Like Marvel, DC also has a number of second-stringers that might also make the first team. The 10 DC heroes (or hero groups) discussed here also have a good possibility of becoming first-stringers for DC, if DC would only give them the right chance. —

1. SHADE, THE CHANGING MAN: Falsely accused and convicted of treason, Rac Shade was in the process of clearing his name when his title was cancelled in the DC Implosion of 1978, and since then, nothing has been heard from him.

When the last issue of *Shade, The Changing Man* ended, Shade had struck a deal with the president of his other-dimensional homeworld Meta. Using the power of his mysterious M-Vest, Shade was temporarily the only person that was able to travel between the dimensions to Earth. In exchange for doing this, Meta's president would reopen Shade's treason case and try to clear him of the false charges. There was just one catch: until the conviction was actually reversed, Shade would still be under a death sentence, and the people that he was trying to help would be duty-bound to attempt carrying out the sentence.

Shade agreed to the terms and left for Earth, but what happened after that? Did he reach the Earth-Zone safely? Has he defeated the crime ring? Has Shade been cleared of the charges, or his death sentence overturned?

The full potential of the M-Vest remains a mystery even to its wearer. All that Shade has been able to learn is that the vest has flight power and produces a force field. The force field creates illusions that make Shade appear monstrously distorted to others. With this in mind, future appearances should show Shade learning more about the M-Vest's abilities.

2. NEMESIS: He was supposedly killed at the end of *Brave & Bold* #193, but DC admitted in the letter column of the very next issue there was a possibility of bringing him back at some future date. No body was actually found; the only evidence that Batman had to suggest Nemesis's death was the torn piece of cloth from Nemesis's sweater bearing his chest emblem, which Batman found in the debris of an explosion. Hardly conclusive proof of his death, especially for someone with Nemesis's resourcefulness and 007-gimmicks.

The recent reorganization of the Justice League has left that organization with a near-lack of non-powered heroes; heroes that rely on their minds to get them out of trouble. Nemesis could fill that niche quite easily. He could also fit in well with the Outsiders, having worked with Batman on a couple of cases, and a working style similar to The Caped Crusader's.

3. DIAL "H" FOR HERO: Now that Chris King and Vicki Grant have been joined by their friend Nick Stevens as a third Dialer, there is a need for more room just to adequately showcase the readers' creations. Even with the continued storylines that were used when the series was a back-up feature in *Superboy*, eight pages were barely enough for two Dialers. With three, the heroes would quickly begin to stumble over each other's feet.

The series' last story in *Superboy* told the origin of the Dials that Chris and Vicki use. One story that should be explored in a Dial "H" *For Hero* return is the origin of the original Dial that Robby Reed used which is now in Nick's possession. Where did it come from? How did it get into the cave where Robby found it? How does it work?

The effect of becoming any sort of super-hero on the Dialers is an aspect that has never been fully explored in the series. Transforming into normal-looking heroes such as The Moth or Futura would probably not be all that traumatic, but how would someone react to becoming one of the more bizarre heroes such as Fuzz-Ball or Raggedy Doll?

4. THE ATOM: The *Sword Of The Atom* mini-series proved to be so popular that *The Sword Of the Atom Special* #1 was published to tie up the loose ends left by the mini-series.

At the end of the special, Ray and Jean Palmer split up for good, and Ray abandoned civilization for the Amazon jungle, where he was reunited with Princess Laethwen and her people. But what happens to the Atom and Laethwen now? Do they rebuild Morlaidh? Or do they find a new home somewhere in the jungle? DC used the mini-series and special to give a new direction to the Atom; let's see a continuation of that new direction with new adventures.

5. THE GLOBAL GUARDIANS: This is a group of international heroes and heroines that first appeared in *Super Friends*. Two of them, Jack O'Lantern and The Seraph, briefly had back-up features in *Super Friends*, and several co-starred with Superman in *DC Comics Presents* #46.

At the end of the *DC Comics Presents* story, Doctor Mist, the self-appointed leader of the Global Guardians, told the other heroes to be ready for his next summons. He also hinted that he considered all of Earth's super-heroes to be part of the Global Guardians. The question is when will Doctor Mist issue his next summons, and who will he summon?

6. THE ELEMENTALS: This is another group of heroes that was introduced in *Super Friends*, and is not the same as the Comico group with the same name. These four heroes (Gnome, Sylph, Undine and Salamander) are elemental spirits who, in an attempt to gain souls of their own, possess the bodies of four humans.

The hosts have no powers of their own; only when the spirits are in control of the hosts' bodies do they have superpowers. The hosts are also not especially thrilled about sharing bodies with the spirits, but they have agreed (albeit reluctantly) to assist the spirits in their quest for souls.

The hosts have mentioned that when the spirits are in control of their bodies that they are aware of what is happening, but aren't able to control their bodies. Might they, however, be able to engage in advice-giving and general kibitzing, the same way that Professor Martin Stein does for Firestorm?

7. THE RED TORNADO: (For the most part, all we have seen is the costumed hero side of the character. Not much has been shown of his civilian identity of John Smith. This could be one focus of a Red Tornado feature: exploring his relationships with his girlfriend Kathy Sutton and his ward Traya as well as taking a look at his civilian job.

What is his civilian job, anyway? At one time he was a lab assistant to Dr. Bruce Gordon, but with Gordon out on the west coast in the pages of *Green Lantern*, it's highly unlikely that the New York based Tornado is still working for him.

The Red Tornado's main hang-up is that he thinks that because he is an android, he is incapable of emotions, particularly love. Kathy-Traya and his friends in the JLA have begun to show him how wrong he is on that point. That could be another focus of a Red Tornado feature: for Reddy to realize that he is human, and that his physical form is just a little different.

Reddy could also be used as a recurring character in *The Fury of Firestorm*. After all, both Firestorm and the Red Tornado are based in New York City, and they have worked well together in the past. It would seem only natural that they would bump into each other from time to time.

8. THE YELLOW PERI: She first appeared in *Superboy* #34 and #35 as a carnival magician who obtained a book that gave her real magic powers. She tried being a super-hero, but her spells kept backfiring, and Superboy tossed the book into space, which took away her powers.

The Yellow Peri next appeared in *Action* #559, when the book returned to the now-adult Loretta Grant. She has more control over her powers now, but now she is being manipulated by her husband into using those powers for his own purposes.

The Yellow Peri could become one of DC's better superheroes, but a few things would have to happen for that to occur. First, Loretta should realize what her husband's true motives are, and Superman has given her a warning in this direction. A divorce will probably result when Loretta learns the truth, but since Alvin Grant has already revealed that he married Loretta just to win a bet, it's probably one of the best things that she could do.

Secondly, the Yellow Peri needs some training, to gain better control over her powers. Zatara the Magician would be an excellent candidate for a teacher. Retired from superheroing, training a new hero might be a welcome challenge for Zatara.

9. SINESTRO: The renegade Green Lantern turned against the Weaponers of Qward in *Green Lantern* #127, eliminating the chance of his ever obtaining another yellow power ring. The ring he had at that time was destroyed in *Super Friends* #46, when he said that he was going to think about changing his life. Doctor Mist sent him away (probably to Korugar) to do that, along with a warning of what might happen if he didn't change.

He went from hero to villain; could the pendulum be swinging back to hero? It is not likely that the Guardians would restore Sinestro to Green Lantern status, but is it possible that they might give him an opportunity to atone for his crimes? An exile on Earth, perhaps, where he could be under the training and supervision of several of Earth's superheroes. After his probation period was over, Sinestro would be free to return to Korugar, or to any other planet to operate as a superhero.

10. HEAT WAVE: Mick Rory may have reformed and abandoned his high-temperature criminal identity, but he is still quite usable. After all, he does know the double-identity of the Flash, and in his last appearance, he even became friends with his one-time enemy.

If the Flash is convicted of the manslaughter charges against him, it would leave Central City a city used to a superhero's protection, without a protector. It's possible that Mick Rory might want to step in as a replacement for the Flash. Not as Heat Wave, that identity would be too suspect for the police and public to accept. Instead, have him create a new identity and costume, but still use the same equipment that he used as Heat Wave.

Okay, readers, it's your turn. Only your support can bring these second-string heroes from their supporting roles to the spotlight at center stage. ●

Shade, the Changing Man.



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COMICS IN REVIEW

R.A. Jones on the ten best titles of 1984

Several months ago, I made so bold as to list what I considered to be the top ten comics on the stands. Well, like it or not, you're going to have to put up with my opinions once again as I pass along my nominations for the premier titles of 1984.

There are a few differences this time around. As you might expect some titles have dropped off my list while new ones have taken their places. Since I have been given the entire column this time around, I will be able to explain exactly why a particular book made the grade for me.

Last time, not wishing to single out any one title as "the best," I simply listed my selections in alphabetical order. Some readers felt this was a bit of a cop out—perhaps they were right. At any rate, the powers that be have asked me to rank my top ten in numerical order. So be it. Here—for better or for worse—are my choices for the top ten comics of 1984, ranked in ascending order (and no fair peeking ahead!)

#10: POWER PACK

When I reviewed the first issue of this book six months ago, I barely gave it a passing grade. How then did it manage to make it into my top ten?

Simple: by improving tremendously month after month. In that initial review I expressed the opinion that Louise Simonson could turn the book into a winner, and in that I was right. One of my complaints was that she needed to work harder at characterizing the children as children, rather than three-foot-tall adults. Her efforts to do so began to bear fruit with the first page of the very next issue. Katie, discharging bolts of energy, is throwing a very childlike temper tantrum—simultaneously stamping her feet, sucking her thumb, and yelling for her Mommy.

Indeed, it is in her depiction of Katie that Simonson struck the true Mother Lode on this book. The scenes of the little girl, trapped on an alien ship but more concerned about her loose tooth and whether the tooth fairy will be able to find her in outer space, are true gems. The characterizations of the other children also ring true—from their almost constant hunger to their hero-worship of Spider-Man.

The stories have been well plotted and strongly scripted. If she continues to advance at the rate she has over the last six months, Louise Simonson could go on to outshine her husband in the eyes of the fans.

Artistically, June Brigman has shown equally rapid development. Compare her work on the first issue to that in the most recent. In the former, there were a bit too many empty backgrounds, stiff figures, and misproportions. As a rookie she was possibly unsure of herself.

No doubt her confidence has grown measureably with each outing. There is still room for improvement, but her work already shows greater detail, smoothness, and expressiveness. Bob Wiacek's inks have blended very well with her pencils, further enhancing the graphic integrity of the book.

To be completely honest, *Power Pack* is not great literature, nor an example of epic storytelling. What it is is the heartwarming story of four children trying to cope with adult power and responsibility without losing their childhood. At this it succeeds admirably. Though several books are hyped as such, this is one of the few that can genuinely be enjoyed by both children and adults.

#9: DR. STRANGE

Doctor Strange is a character who has been an integral part of the Marvel Universe for two decades, yet he has never really been able to break into the upper ranks of fan favorites. Despite this, there have been times when the treatment of the character has been excellent. The original Stan Lee/Steve Ditko classics come to mind easily, but also exceptional was the all-too-brief collaboration between Lee (and Roy Thomas) and Barry Windsor-Smith. Perhaps the last truly outstanding combination was that of Steve Englehart and Frank Brunner. Roger Stern and his two best artistic partners, Marshall Rogers and Paul Smith, have not quite attained the level of the creative teams listed above, but have shown every indication that they could well reach it in the not-too-distant future. This has been a good year for Dr. Stephen Strange.

Of the four issues to appear in 1984, #66 and #68 stand out as the best when viewed for story content. Issue #66 had a serious premise—Strange's efforts to help three holy men locate the latest reincarnation of their order's high lama—but it is handled with a charming sense of humor. As the located lama prepares to leave for the Himalayas, he dons an MTV ball cap and supervises the loading of a television satellite dish!

There is nothing funny about issue #68. It is the taut and powerful story of a man (The Black Knight) in danger of losing his very soul. It is a gripping and well-conceived tale.

Paul Smith, meanwhile, is making an outstanding contribution to the book. Smith is unquestionably one of the most talented young pencillers in comics today; an artist who chose to leave the lucrative job of portraying the X-Men in order to depict the Master of the Mystic Arts.

He is able to draw with dynamic energy, as in the scene from issue #65 where a charlatan unwittingly releases a horde of demons—or

with a more subdued power as in the final panel of issue #68 wherein the Black Knight kneels within a sunbeam beautifully embellished by inker Terry Austin.

Doctor Strange receives little publicity, but it is consistently one of the more enjoyable titles in the Marvel line. If you want something more than standard superheroics, you need look no further. With the groundwork being laid for the forthcoming battle against Umar, this should remain a title to be savored.

#8: BLUE DEVIL

Wait a minute—time out. How the heck did *Blue Devil* manage to sneak into the top ten list? The book is sheer lunacy. It doesn't take itself seriously. It's totally irreverent. Hmmm . . . I think that's exactly how it got into the #8 position.

This book is fun. F.U.N. There are no heavy messages, no delusions of grandeur, no aspirations to relevancy. It's pure escapist entertainment, and done with such a deft hand that it deserves to be ranked among the year's best.

The scripting team of Dan Mishkin and Gary Cohn seem to be so completely in sync that they must be joined at the lip. Issue after issue they manage to present some of the most delightful humor in pulp. And just for you unfortunates who haven't been reding the book, I've some short examples.

Blue Devil saves a tourist couple from being mugged by a gang of Three Stooges lookalikes. Awe-struck, the lady tourist asks, "Are you . . . Superman?," to which Blue Devil replies, "Yes, ma'am. That's who I am."

New to the ways of superheroes, Blue Devil innocently asks Superman who he is in his secret identity . . . then proceeds to challenge the Man of Steel to an arm wrestling contest. In an attempt to banish an alien from Earth, BD attempts to shove the alien—who is roughly the size of the Hulk—into a microwave oven! Need I say more?

Paris Cullins displays admirable talent in conveying both humor and drama in his artwork. An excellent example of art compliment ing script came in a scene where the superheroine Zatanna, wanting to kiss our hero, grabs him by the horns to pull his face down to her level. Unfortunately, Cullins has now left the script, and subsequent efforts by Gil Kane and Keith Giffen have been less appealing. Mike Chen is scheduled to come aboard soon, and hopefully will be more successful at capturing the visual delight.

Blue Devil may fall into the category of being a guilty pleasure. You might be embarrassed about enjoying this unadulterated silliness—but I don't.

#7: ATARI FORCE

Atari Force does not blaze new trails in storytelling. It is rather basic comics science fiction; like much of its kind perhaps overly much in the mold of *Star Wars*. It is not the story per se which has earned it a spot on my top ten, but rather a single facet of the story which I consider to be of paramount importance to the success of any strip: characterization.

It is the richly diverse characters which sets this title above many in its field. There are no cardboard cut outs here, but rather human beings, fully formed and firmly fleshed. Martin Champion, a man obsessed, who has let the lust for revenge often blind him to his duties as a father. Pakrat, a furry rodent like thief. By nature a rather cowardly soul who seeks to avoid violence when cornered he becomes a fighting fury. Tempest possessed of a stange power which



sets him forever apart from other men, further isolated by the nearly impenetrable wall his father has erected around himself. Even the minor supporting characters in this book are distinctly crafted individuals: each of interest in his or her own right.

The catalyst for this book, the spark that ignites it to life, is Dart. A former mercenary, she is a natural leader unwavering in her courage and unyielding in her loyalty. The bond she shares with her "little brother," Tempest, is one of deep and abiding love. Dart is arguably the most strongly developed and multi-dimensional female character in comics today.

Gerry Conway's character development has made this the finest body of work in his career. Yet, having achieved that, he has decided to leave the book. Fortunately, waiting in the wings is Mike Baron, who proved with his work on *Nexus* and *The Badger* that he is aptly qualified to carry on the good fight.

As I predicted a year ago, it has taken only the platform of a successful title to launch artist Garcia Lopez on the course toward stardom—as evidenced by his recent selection as the replacement for George Perez on *Teen Titans*. The strength of his design can be seen on the cover of issue #6: Tempest—beaten, bloody, but unbowed, vainly attempts to withstand the attack of the Dark Destroyer. Proof of his skill as a visual storyteller can be found in issue #11—the sequence involving the fight between Dart and Blackjak. Like Conway, Lopez is leaving the book, but Eduardo Barreto seems well-suited to fill the breach, with further graphic continuity supplied by inker Ricardo Villagran.

There are spaceships, lasers and aliens a'plenty in *Atari Force*, but again it is the characters who are responsible for both literally and figuratively giving it flesh and blood.

#6: NEW MUTANTS

Throughout the first year of its run, *New Mutants* was caught in an ever steeper downward spiral. The stories were contrived and formulaic, lacking in any sense of direction. In 1984, not only was that decline halted, it was actually reversed—to the point where the strip vaulted into contention for top honors.

The year had an auspicious beginning, with a three-part story which brought the New Mutants into conflict with their evil counterparts, the Hellions (who are under the tutelage of the malevolent White Queen). Scripter Chris Claremont captured a bit of the original X-Men magic in a scene (from issue #15) where the young heroes have to scrape together bus fare in order to reach the scene of the battle! Rookie artist Tom Mandrake was also impressive, putting the fine finishing touch to the layouts of Sal Buscema.

Already picking up speed, the book kicked into high gear with issue #16, and the arrival of Bill Sienkiewicz at the artistic helm. As I have observed in the past, the strength of Chris Claremont's collaborating often seems to be in direct proportion to the strength of his collaborating artist. In this case, the team-up created instant dynamism.

The horrifying struggle with the demon bear, the first encounter with the bizarre alien Warlock, and the current storyline involving Cloak and Dagger all offer proof of Claremont's dramatic skills. This title was one of the few to actually benefit from the insipid Secret *Wars* series. While that book kept Prof. Xavier otherwise occupied, the New Mutants were allowed to develop as strong characters of their own.

The strength of that characterization lies in the female members of the team. Magma is a prime example of culture shock. Thrown from the 21st century Nova Roma into 20th century America while simultaneously learning to cope with an overwhelming mutant power has created a play of wide personal conflict. Similarly, self-conflict is at the core of the interest generated by Illyana, struggling to fight the very real sorcerous evil within her, and Rahne Sinclair, imbued by rigid religious upbringing with a false sense of unworthiness. Most commendable has been Danielle Moonstar's metamorphosis from a stereotypical angry Indian into a strongly portrayed young woman who is assuming the role of team leader.

Bill Sienkiewicz is one of the most stylistic artists in comics today. He use of light and shadow is exceptional and his pencil work is able to convey both realism and abstract impressionism without the two styles negating each other. His art has also been undergoing a change with the passing months.

At a guess, I would say this stems from two sources. One is his apparent strong desire to completely dispel the comparisons between his work and that of Neal Adams. The second would be an effort to expand the boundaries of his artistic interpretation. Recently though, this experimentation has shown signs of moving out of his control.

In the current issue (#24), his portrayal of Sam Guthrie resembles that of an emaciated zombie. The hair of several characters is drawn is such a manner as to give their heads a triangular shape. Even Prof. Xavier's smoothly bald head is drawn with sharp angles. There is an El Greco-like elongation and distortion of figures. It may prove necessary to bring in an ink-r (such as New Mutants co-creator Bob McLeod or Joe Rubenstein) to restrain Sienkiewicz's artistic excesses.

Criticisms aside, *New Mutants* has become one of the best dramatic titles on the stand, so much that it threatens to overtake Chris Claremont's other "baby"—*X-Men*. Speaking of which . . .

#5: THE X-MEN

Inconsistency. It is the word which best characterizes this title. Inconsistencies in both story and art have threatened to push *X-Men* completely out of the top ten.

The year began poorly with the story that brought the mutant band back from the Secret Wars and into a battle with a rampaging dragon in the skies above Tokyo. Claremont got back on the scripting track with the next two issues: first with an exploration of the horror which continues to haunt Rogue, then with the marvelous issue in which Kitty faced the loss of Peter Rasputin's love and in which he as beaten in a barroom brawl with the Juggernaut.

There was a one-issue let-down, followed by another upswing which led into issue #186—one of the most finely written stories of the year, aided by the epic artwork of Barry Windsor-Smith and Terry Austin. Then back into a slump with two issues containing little more than tedious battles with the Dire Wraiths. A return to quality in the next issue enabled the book to remain in the top ten.

Chris Claremont still remains one of the finest writers in the Marvel Bullpen, despite the shortcomings of some recent issues. When he is on target, his scripts are emotional detonators. He has introduced several sub-plots which, if properly

executed, could fully justify the book's continued popularity. *Rogue*'s ongoing efforts to curb her runaway power; the menace of the Hellfire Club and its newest member, Selene; and the possibly even greater threat posed by our own government.

John Romita, Jr., though a fine artist, has struggled in his efforts on this book. When he first came aboard he appeared to be emulating the style of his predecessor, Paul Smith, presumably in an effort to maintain continuity. This is admirable, but in my view unnecessary. He has since allowed his own style to re-emerge, but—as with the stories—the results have been uneven. Issue #189 offers good examples of this fact. Certain panels are illustrated in a manner more appropriate for a *Richie Rich* comic; others show a sense of design and execution bordering on brilliance.

Characterizations on the whole remain strong, with Wolverine still the most compelling. Many fans seem to be of the opinion that Wolverine "belongs" to John Byrne, simply because the artist chose to spotlight him during his tenure on the book; but both before and after Byrne, Claremont showed he has a firm grasp of this complex hero. Claremont also continues to rate high marks for his fine female characters.

If Romita and Claremont can consistently maintain the high level of work of which they are both capable, this book will remain among the best. If not, it could take a hard fall.

#4: TEEN TITANS

For the purposes of this column, I have chosen to lump the softback-hardback versions of this book together and view them as a single title. My sentiments regarding the dual nature of this book have been clearly stated in the past, but the criticisms lodged then were aimed at the editorial level, and have no reflection on my opinion of the authorial and artistic merits of the title.

Like *X-Men*, this book had gone through a period of decline, but it bounced back strongly this year. It began with the four-part "Judas Contract" saga, in which the team was nearly shattered by the brutal betrayal of Terra. The story also introduced Jericho and dragged Dick Grayson out of self-pity and into his new costumed identity as Nightwing. It was a powerful and moving story that placed the slightly shaky book back on firm ground.

It was then time to tie up loose ends, with the three-part story leading to the destruction of H.I.V.E.—that evil organization which has been hounding the New Titans since their inception. The next two issues were well done, but seemed little more than fillers, as more of the creative drive seemed to be diverted to the new hardback title. It has gotten off to a stunning beginning with a continuing story of the horrendous resurrection of the demonic *Trigon*.

Artistically, George Perez produced some of the finest work of his career. His pencils are incredibly detailed, and provide a great deal of the emotional impact presented in the stories. Other duties have taken him away from the book (which he has also been co-plotting), but a more-than-adequate replacement has been found in the person of Garcia Lopez.

So there it is, in black and white, for those of you who have asked—this year, in my opinion, *Teen Titans* has been a slightly better book than *X-Men*—though you will notice that neither title gets my vote as the year's best. That will come soon enough.

#3: AMERICAN FLAGG!

American Flagg! is one of the finest titles to come from the alternative publishers. Howard Chaykin has done fine work as both artist and writer for several years, but it was only with the advent of this title that his talent reached its full potential.

In the past, Chaykin's art suffered from a sketchiness that often gave it the appearance of being rushed and sloppy. Apparently his love for this strip has given him a greater sense of discipline, which has manifested itself in a new, crisp, clean inking style that has made his art some of the most eye-pleasing in the industry.

Flagg! is also the home of possibly the most complex story-line you will find in comics, which makes it a difficult book for new readers to jump into. Chaykin continues his long-time habit of loading the story with a multitude of supporting characters—so many that even regular readers will occasionally be confused.

The inclusion of an index in the back of each issue is a good step in the direction of dispelling that confusion. I have also found that it helps if you sit down at the end of the year and re-read the last 12 issues back-to-back. The story then becomes completely comprehensible, and you will find both your understanding and enjoyment of the strip to be increased tremendously.

Several readers have questioned Chaykin's contention that Reuben Flagg is a patriot, perceiving the book to carry more pessimism than patriotism. At times I have held that view myself, but again a re-reading brings new understanding.

It must be remembered that Chaykin is a child of the '60s, and as such may well see patriotism more in terms of rebellion than in terms of flag waving. One of the strengths of our country is its strong heritage of personal independence and the right (even duty) of the people to take action if and when the government undermines that freedom. Seen in these terms, Flagg is indeed a patriot in his efforts to see that the people rather than the Plex determine their own destiny.

American Flagg! is a prime example of the new life the alternatives can pump into the comics industry. Exceptional story and illustration make this book one of the highlights of modern American graphic art.

#2: JON SABLE, FREELANCE

I find it highly impressive that First Comics, a relative newcomer with only seven titles on the stands, is responsible for two of the finest comics in the market. Many will no doubt take exception to my decision to rank *Jon Sable* even higher than the multiple Eagle Award winning *American Flagg!*, but I have a very good reason for doing so—and while that reason may be valid only for me, that fact does not negate its validity in this context.

If I may once again use a single word to characterize a book, the operative word here would be "realism." I fully realize that realism is a subjective perception, but I feel fairly certain that most readers would agree with me that this book is more nearly grounded in our "real" world than are most titles.

As with several others books on this list, *Sable* began the year in high fashion with a two-parter which saw Sable journey to the jungles of Viet Nam in a valiant but ironically futile effort to prove that American soldiers are still being held in that country. Subsequent issues carried him to East Berlin, Nicaragua, Africa, and finally to the back alleys of New York in *The Rookie*—a contender for best story of the year honors.

Mike Grell has ripped his stories from the pages of today's newspapers. He has established Jon Sable as a fully developed and eminently believable character; a character with very human strengths and weaknesses; a character who bleeds. Again as with several of the other titles in my top ten, this one is also notable for its diverse and fascinating female characters—Maggie the Cat, Eden Kendall, and Myke Blackmon notably.

Grell the artist operates in almost perfect harmony with Grell the scripter—so much so that he is able to tell large portions of the story solely with visuals, without words and yet without making the story seem to rush by too quickly. I find it interesting to note that Grell is a penciller whose work actually seems to suffer from appearing on slicker paper. It needs the softening influence of pulp.

Jon Sable is a character whose heroism comes from his humanity, not from a super power. It is this grittiness and illusion of reality that makes this book one of the highlights of modern American graphic art.

And now, the one you've been waiting for—

#1: SWAMP THING

That's right—my choice for the best comic of 1984 is a book which does not star a superhero, a hired gun, a futuristic cop, or a dashing spaceman, but rather a shuffling mass of sentient vegetation... who just happens to be one of the most human characters in comics today.

The bulk of the credit for this extraordinary title must go to Alan Moore, who is quite probably the most gifted writer in the industry. His mastery of language is incredible. He has intimate knowledge of the power of words, and he exploits that power to the maximum, creating a world in which decadence and dark decay are the order of the day.

At the same time, there is a lyricism to his writing that often lays a delicate patina over the horror, creating a juxtaposition of beauty against the pervading ugliness. In much the same way, Swamp Thing is immersed in the slime, but he is not of it. His is an idyllic soul attuned to the rhythms of life—but caught in a world where death is a constant companion.

Every issue to appear this year is deserving of praise, but I would like to focus special attention on issue #29. This was the story I described in an earlier column as being "gut wrenching." The splash page of that issue contains perhaps the most stunning visual representation of horror you will ever see. The terror this tale imparts is not so much that which turns the stomach as that which squeezes the soul.

It could well prove to be a benchmark issue as well, due to DC's decision to publish it after the Comics Code Authority rejected it in its entirety. Henceforth, the book will not even be presented to the Authority. DC should be applauded for this action, which proves—for those few who may not have already known—that the Code has become no more than a toothless tiger. (Sidenote to DC: Please get rid of the "Sophisticated Suspense" tagline—it sounds terribly pretentious.)

Horror, perhaps more than any other genre in comics, requires close coordination between story and art. All of the artists who have worked on the title this year, and especially the team of Stephen Bissette and John Totleben, have done a tremendous job. The Swamp Thing's world has been effectively presented as one of dark moodiness, where death, terror and madness have taken on solid form. Issue #30's depiction of the Joker should serve as a model for all Batman artists.

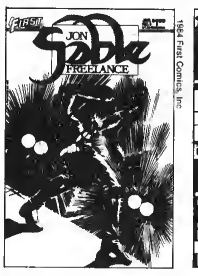
Swamp Thing is the most superbly written comic published in America today; the standard against which all others should be measured. It is the kind of creative effort that could bring to our comics the respect accorded to graphic art in other countries. If you only read one comic each month—it should be *Swamp Thing*.

Postscript

There are two titles from my last top ten that had to be omitted this time around for reasons that had nothing to do with their merit: *Camelot 3000* and *Nexus*, which did not appear often enough this year to be considered. In a related vein, I chose not to include the excellent *Machine Man* since it was only a four-issue series.

There are several titles which show promise of becoming top contenders, but have simply not been out long enough to prove their worthiness. Noteworthy among these are *Badger*, returning courtesy of First Comics; *Mister X*, a surrealistic science fantasy from Vortex; *The Elementals*, a decidedly different superhero team from Comico; and *Dalgoda*, the delightfully droll offering from Fantagraphics Books. You will note that all of the above are products of alternative publishers, indicating that there could be a dramatic shake-up in next year's top ten.

So there you have it—my choices for the ten best titles. Whether you agree or disagree with my selection, I hope you'll share your reaction with us. This list only reflects my personal taste—your opinions will be welcomed. ●





Comics Buyer's Guide
Fan Awards for 1984

Vote for your favorite in each category:

1. Favorite Editor

2. Favorite Writer

3. Favorite Artist

4. Favorite Cover

5. Favorite Comic Book

6. Favorite Story

7. Favorite Book*

8. Favorite Character

9. Favorite Supporting Character

10. Favorite Publication about Comics

11. Favorite Writer about Comics

12. Favorite Fan Artist

Phil Seuling Award for Favorite Direct-Sale-Only Title

**"Favorite Book" can include your favorite graphic novel, favorite reprint collection, favorite book about comics, etc. — with a copyright date of 1984.*

Only material cover-dated 1984 is eligible for consideration.

Anyone may copy and circulate this ballot, and any fan may vote only once and vote for no more than one nominee in each category. Ballot-box stuffing will result in the destruction of all ballots involved. You need not vote in all categories. The ***Comics Buyer's Guide*** *is not eligible for Category 10.*

A free copy of ***The Comics Buyer's Guide*** *#600 (which will carry the results of voting) will be sent to any voter who does not already have a current or expired subscription to* ***CBG****.*

Mail your ballot individually in a single envelope by April 13, 1985 to:

The Comics Buyer's Guide *Fan Awards*
700 East State Street
Iola, Wisconsin 54990

Name **Age****Male** **Female** *(circle one)*

Street or Box

City, State, and ZIP

Please type or print your vote and information clearly.

AMAZING READERS

T.M. MAPLE
Weston, ONT

Comments on Collecting

I would like to expand on your comment in #55's lettercol that the chances of making a killing in the comics speculation business is very unlikely.

Firstly, let me say that I am talking here about new or relatively new comics. Buying silver or golden age comics is a whole other ballgame and also requires a much higher buy-in price.

I see lots of people, even very young ones, buying multiple copies of new comics—usually the popular titles like *X-Men* or *Teen Titans*. The hope is to sell these comics at a profit. Other readers have expressed the view that even if they buy single copies only, their collection represents a good investment as well as a source of reading pleasure. I feel that these attitudes and expectations are almost certainly doomed to be fruitless.

An item will command a high price if the demand for it far outstrips the supply. In comics, this breaks roughly down into situations in which a given comic either is in high demand or low supply. But popular titles, by definition, are already in fairly high supply. Thus buying extra copies of *Teen Titans* or *X-Men* is probably not going to pay off. Sure, earlier issues command high prices now, but the titles weren't as popular then. Of course, if demand continues to grow and grow, then it will always outstrip supply. This is at least possible in the comics market today, but I wouldn't count on it for every title. Also, much high demand for an issue is temporary because of temporary shortages. Thus, *Thor* #337 may command a high price now, but *Thor* #350 probably won't—and #337's price will undoubtedly fall over the short term. Also, investors may tend to distort the market. If very many of the copies of a mag are being bought now for investment purposes, then nearly all of these will, in time, come onto the market and thus drive up the supply. In other words, a popular title may seem even more so than it is because of investment buying.



Illustration by CHAS. GILLEN; Characters © 1984 DC Comics, Inc.

On the other hand, a comic is in low supply now only if few copies were bought when it first came out, meaning, it was relatively unpopular. But there are many lower-selling title and few will have a great surge in popularity. Is this new artist the next Frank Miller or will be be quickly forgotten? Is this new character the next *Spider Man* or the new *Geek*?

One must remember that a fairly high price does not mean that your local dealer is interested in buying a copy from you. (And if you sell on your own you get full market price, but also bear additional costs and frustrations.) The dealer holds back a certain proportion of most new comics for future sale as back issues. Or the dealer may have enough copies on hand that he's bought from others. Or the dealer may be caught in a squeeze. He may have bought the issue for a certain price and thus does not want to let it go at a loss even if it is not a fast mover.

In addition, there are financial considerations. Prime among them is that you will not get full market price for your comic. If you sell to a dealer he he will buy at a discount so that he may cover his costs and earn a profit, too. To those who say dealers charge too much and pay too little, I say: This is sometimes true. But remember that the dealer is doing you a service and no one is stopping you from selling on your own. Also, I must say that most people decry "excess" profits when they are buying but feel that no profit is too high if they're selling. For instance, you decry the dealer only paying 50% of market price of your comic, but think it "only fair" to sell that copy of *Thor* #337 you paid 60 cents for to him for $5.00—a whopping 733% profit. If you sell on your own, advertising, shipping, and packaging charges will eat into your take. Also, you should remember that if you had put that money in the bank it would have earned interest in the meantime. For instance, let's say you buy a comic book for 60 cents and hold it for five years and then sell it. If you had put that 60 cents

in the bank at 6% interest (a low rate, I think) then it would have compounded to 60 cents. If the dealer paid you 50% of market price (probably a high percent, if he would buy it all) then the comic would have to be worth $1.60 just to break even. And this doesn't include the cost of sales tax on your purchase or the plastic bag to store it in, etc.

Finally, what's the chance that you will indeed hold onto the comic for the five years (or whatever) and not lose it or damage it in the meantime?

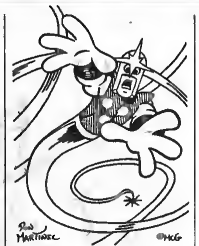
Personally, I think that comics should be bought for reasons of enjoyment or for what value they are to you as a reading experience. Later on, if you can recover some of your money by selling them, fine and dandy. But to look at comics strictly or mainly as an investment is a difficult chore and probably ultimately unprofitable—and it ignores the real value and purpose of comics to boot.

I personally sell my comics only if they are worth more on the market than they are to me. This means I don't sell very many and that I've still got some comics worth a few bucks but have sold others for 10 or 20 cents.

Some people say investors have ruined the hobby of reading and collecting comics. Maybe so. But the irony, of course, is that most investors have hurt themselves financially, too.

And in rebuttal: let's not have any stories of "I sold *Teen Titans* #1 for $15." Instead, take a look at *all* the comics you bought and *all* that you sold (or threw away) and see it if still looks so good to you.

★ *You've struck the nail right on the head, T.M... with a very big hammer. One of the most influential men in comics was speaking to me over lunch in August of 1984 and he is convinced that* Secret Wars *is riding on a crest of speculating fans who are buying five and seven copies of each issue. And considering the resounding negative votes that the magazine got from virtually every letter to come in to* AMAZING HEROES, *I can't believe that everyone that is buying the magazine is reading it. The problem is that there are so many copies of* Secret Wars *in circulation, there is hardly a single dealer in the country that will pay cover price to buy them from a collector. So for every multiple issue of*



Secret Wars that was sold, the speculator lost money.

BUY YOUR COMICS FOR THE READING ENJOYMENT INVOLVED because, in general, every multiple issue that you buy of an already popular title is like flushing money down the toilet. Money that could be used to buy comics from some of the smaller publishers... publishers that desperately need your support in order to be able to continue publishing.

Also, investing in smaller publishers' publications may be worth more money because they tend to have smaller print runs, the availability of these titles will be smaller should the demand increase, making those issues go up in price faster because the supply is so much smaller. How many people out there would now like to trade their copy of Micronauts *#1 for a copy of* Cerebus *#1?* —Dave

JAMES TIMLICK
Winnipeg, Manitoba

Classy Color

My memory may be failing but I think that this is probably your first letter from Manitoba (or Winnipeg at the very least).

Now, on to the main point of this letter which is the coloring on your covers. To be even more specific, the coloring on the cover of issue #51's Michael Golden cover was just stunning. The only fault I can find with the cover is that you didn't list who did the separations. Did Michael do them himself?

Issue #51 isn't the only issue that has had good coloring on it cover. Issues #48, #46, #45, and #43 have also been colored very well.

It appears there's quite a controversy concerning which comic strip will be replacing *Star Wars* when its run is over. My suggestion would be to replace the strips with some interviews of little known creators (even though you are a hero oriented magazine and not a creator oriented magazine) or to run new *Steve Canyon* or older adventure strips.

By the way, the preview of *Mr. X* was very well done, and had me anticipating it quite eagerly.

★ *In fact, Michael Golden did the coloring on the cover of* AMAZING HEROES *#51 himself. He painted the coloring onto a blueline reproduction of the artwork, and it was then photographically separated.*

Art director Tom Mason cut the separations for the AH *#48 cover from a color guide by Jaime Hernandez. Janet Toombs cut the separations for the covers for* AH *#46 and #43, with color guides provided by Marvel for #46 and by artist Willie Blyberg for #43. The colors for #45 were photographically separated from the painting that Klaus Janson did over Ed Hannigan's pencilled cover.*

For those of you who aren't good at recalling issue numbers, #51 was the Bucky O'Hare cover by Michael Golden, #48 was the Mr. X cover by Jaime Hernandez, #46 was the Power Pack cover by June Brigman and Bob Wiacek, #45 was the multiple heroes cover by Ed Hannigan and Klaus Janson, and #43 was the Warlock cover by Willie Blyberg.

Thank you for the kind words. —Dave

STEVEN GRANT
Los Angeles, CA

Congrats for Camelot

Enjoyed the well-researched "Camelot in Four Colors" article in AH #55 a lot. If you're going to continue with "Hero Histories," this is the sort I'd much rather see. Alan Stewart may be interested to know that I did a "Black Knight in The Crusades" three-part series for Al Milgrom a couple of years ago that should be appearing in the

Illustration by DON MARTINEZ Character ™ 1984 Marvel Comics Group.

WOT'RE YOU LAFFIN' AT?
HA! HAW-HAW! YOU!
HA!
YAAH-HA-HA
TAKE IT *EASY*, HUGO! WHEN A GUY'S THE STAR OF A COMIC AS FUNNY AS THE ALL-NEW HUGO™ COMICS, THIS SORT OF THING JUST CAN'T BE HELPED!
by MILTON KNIGHT, JR.
From FANTAGRAPHICS BOOKS

AMAZING READERS

Marvel Fanfare is one of these days. It picks up from Englehart's Walter Mitty-ish ending in *Defenders* #11 and has the Black Knight finding himself surrounded and disgusted by the brutal realities of life in the 12th century; that prompts his search for the idyllic isle of Avalon, as Stewart mentions in his article.

Two quibbles, though: your coming comics section ascribes *Indiana Jones* #25 to me. It's actually by my wife Linda. Please keep an eye out for these little errors. Furthermore, R.A. Jones incorrectly pans Mike Zeck for the artwork in *Secret Wars*. Mike produced some of the most dynamic art of his career for the series; the powers that-be at Marvel had him redraw it to leave as Jones states "nothing there for inker John Beatty to salvage."

★ *We would love to run more articles of the quality and direction of "Camelot in Four Colors." Steven, but it creates two problems. Very few articles like Mr. Stewart's "Camelot" come across my desk and the article was very long, much longer than we have room for in a regular 68-page issue of* **AMAZING HEROES**. *But Hero Histories are here to stay as a feature of this magazine.*

Sorry about the Indiana Jones goof. Marvel's releases to distributors, from which we pick up the checklist information, list writers and artists by last name only, which sometimes makes guessing games out of credits. We guessed wrong.

We had heard a rumor that Mr. Zeck had been asked to redraw some of the Secret Wars pages but the version we heard had him being asked even after the pages had been lettered and inked. Once again, R.A. Jones could not be on the inside to know exactly who to blame, so he had to call them them the way that he saw them. Thanks for writing, Steven! —Dave

A.D. LAURENCE
Middleboro, MA

X-Men Additions

I've been buying your magazine since your 1984 Preview Issue, and except for the strip reprints, I like pretty much every issue I've bought. Thanks for steering me into *Mr. X* to name one.



Illustration by CHAS. GILLEN. Characters © 1984 Cerebus Properties, Inc. and King Features Syndicate

I have a couple of additions to your X-Men checklist on page 77 of Part Two. The X-Men History was well done, especially if you didn't pay $10 $12 for the *X-Men Companion* books (like I did).

The original X-Men appeared in a few panels of *Amazing Adventures* #11 in their 1969 costumes as Hank McCoy is shown leaving Professor X's school, a scene taking place sometime after *X-Men* #66. I don't have any of these books on hand, but I believe Jean Grey (as Marvel Girl) and Professor X showed up in later episodes of the Beast's short lived series. And didn't the Angel guest star in *AA* #15? This was all in late '71 and '72.

In the fall of '73 the X-Men showed up at the very end of *Hulk* #172 to finish off the Juggernaut—Professor X, plus Cyclops and Marvel Girl (at least) in their 1969 costumes. They may have been in the beginning of the next issue also, this took place between the X-Men's appearances in *Avengers* #110-111 (misprinted in the checklist as dated '70, instead of '73) and *Captain America* #173-175. The Captain *America* story related to the Hulk story somehow.

P.S. Fooey on R.A. Jones! *Flaming Carrot* is great stuff!!

★ *Thanks for the additions to the checklist. A.D., hopefully the X-Men fans that keep close track of these things were paying attention.*

I'm glad that you have stuck with us after your introduction to our pages in the 1984 Preview Issue. We've been working very hard to make **AMAZING HEROES** *THE Comics Fan Magazine, and we're glad that our efforts haven't gone unnoticed. Stay tuned, we're gearing up to make 1985* **AH**'s *best year ever.*

Although opinion on Flaming Carrot is sharply divided even within the hallowed offices of **AH**, *Exec-Editor Kim Thompson says it's one of his 10 favorite books being published now.* —Dave

STORES SURVEYED FOR THE TOP 100

NOTE: The following stores provided sales information from which **AH**'s *Top 100 was compiled.*

A Little Bookstore
529 E. Camelback, Phoenix AZ 85012

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110 South Fraser St., State College PA 16801

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54 N. Sandusky, Delaware OH 43015

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Collector's Comics
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Colorado Comics
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Comics Hawaii-Maui
1728 Kaahumanu Ave., Wailuku, HI 96793

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Comics Utah
(1) 1956 S. 1100 E., Salt Lake City, UT 84105
(2) 5488 S. 4220 W., Kearns, UT 84118

Cosmix
11819 Laurentien, Montreal, PQ, Canada H4J 2M1

Crusader's Comics
284 Queen Anne Rd., Teaneck, NJ 07666

Family Book Store
101 Transcontinental, Metairie, LA 70001

Fantasco Enterprises, Inc.
21 Central Av., Albany, NY 12210

Fantasm Younge St.
2366 A Younge St., Toronto, Ontario Canada M4P 2E6

The Fat Moose Comics and Games
235 Ridgedale Ave., Cedar Knolls, NJ 07927

Future Dreams
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(2) 8116 S.E. Oak, Portland, OR 97216

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If you own a store and want to participate in the **AH** *"Top 100" Survey, write to us c/o "Top 100," AMAZING HEROES, 707 Camino Manzanas, Thousand Oaks, CA 91360.*

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3, 4	1.40
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172-180	1.20
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5	2.20
6, 7	1.40
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top 100

The list is for the titles that went on sale in September. The number given at the end of each listing is the average number of copies of the comic sold per store.

1. (1) **Secret Wars #9** — 251.1
2. (2) **X-Men #169** — 199.0
3. (--) **X-Men Annual #6** — 166.8
4. (3) **Kitty and Wolverine #3** — 156.6
5. (4) **Alpha Flight #18** — 151.5
6. (5) **New Mutants #23** — 145.9
7. (6) **Amazing Spider-Man #260** — 131.8
8. (8) **New Teen Titans #4** — 129.0
9. (9) **Fantastic Four #274** — 14.1
10. (--) **New Mutants Annual #1** — 121.7

11. (7) **Thor #351** — 110.2
12. (16) **Peter Parker, Spectacular Spider-Man #98** — 93.7
13. (11) **Avengers #251** — 93.5
14. (15) **Machine Man #4** — 91.9
15. (18) **Marvel Team-Up #149** — 77.5
16. (19) **Marvel Age #22** — 74.6
17. (21) **Daredevil #214** — 72.5
18. (24) **Thing #19** — 67.7
19. (23) **Iron Man #190** — 67.3
20. (25) **Power Pack #6** — 64.1

21. (30) **Transformers #3** — 63.8
22. (22) **Legion of Super-Heroes #5** — 62.3
23. (29) **Dreadstar #15** — 57.7
24. (20) **Captain America #301** — 56.6
25. (48) **Marvel Fanfare #18** — 56.4
26. (31) **Tales of the Legion of Super-Heroes #318** — 55.0
27. (26) **G.I. Joe #3** — 54.6
28. (34) **Defenders #139** — 51.0
29. (36) **Rom #62** — 50.9
30. (27) **Micronauts #4** — 50.2

31. (32) **Incredible Hulk #303** — 49.7
32. (38) **Batman and the Outsiders #16** — 49.0
33. (35) **Star Trek #10** — 44.7
34. (--) **Amethyst #1** — 42.0
35. (40) **Infinity, Inc. #9** — 41.7
36. (51) **Blue Devil #7** — 41.5
37. (37) **Dr. Who #3** — 41.3
38. (42) **Justice League of America #234** — 40.5
39. (--) **Dr. Fate #1** — 34.2
40. (24) **Questprobe #2** — 40.5

41. (41) **American Flagg! #16** — 40.2
42. (--) **Time Spirits #1** — 40.0
43. (--) **Spanner's Galaxy #1** — 39.6
44. (41) **Elfquest #20** — 39.4
45. (50) **Conan the King #26** — 31.2
46. (61) **Dazzler #35** — 36.8
47. (52) **Conan the Barbarian #166** — 35.9
48. (45) **Firestorm #31** — 35.4
49. (39) **Six From Sirius #4** — 35.2
50. (46) **Grimjack #6** — 35.1

51. (46) **Jon Sable, Freelance #20** — 35.1
52. (--) **Swamp Thing Annual #2** — 34.5
53. (43) **Starriors #3** — 34.1
54. (55) **Green Lantern #183** — 33.9
55. (57) **Star Wars #91** — 33.2
56. (70) **Power Man/Iron Fist #113** — 32.4
57. (54) **Omega Men #21** — 32.3
58. (51) **Jemm #5** — 32.2
59. (48) **Atari Force #13** — 32.0
60. (**) **Omega Men #22** — 31.3

61. (---) **Red Sonja #5** — 30.7
62. (56) **Swamp Thing #32** —30.7
63. (---) **Conan Annual #9** — 30.6
64. (58) **All-Star Squadron #40** — 30.5
65. (64) **Batman #379** — 30.2
66. (59) **Indiana Jones #25** — 29.1
67. (67) **Warlord #89** — 28.6
68. (77) **New Gods #6** — 27.3
69. (69) **Detective #545** — 27.0
70. (44) **Dalgoda #2** — 26.7

71. (---) **The P.I.'s #1** — 26.7
72. (---) **Conan the Destroyer #1** — 25.8
73. (66) **Sun Devils #6** — 25.8
74. (63) **Crash Ryan #2** — 25.7
75. (---) **Man-Bat #1** — 25.5
76. (65) **Judge Child Quest #4** — 25.4
77. (79) **Marvel Tales #141** — 24.1
78. (62) **DC Comics Presents #77** — 22.6
79. (76) **Savage Sword of Conan #107** — 22.6
80. (73) **Flash #341** — 21.8

81. (75) **Starslayer #24** — 20.3
82. (74) **Arion #26** — 19.5
83. (72) **Nemesis #3** — 19.4
84. (83) **Superman #403** — 19.1
85. (77) **DNAgents #15** — 18.3
86. (86) **Action #562** — 18.1
87. (87) **Aztec Ace #6** — 16.8
88. (81) **Surge #2** — 16.6
89. (89) **World's Finest #310** — 16.5
90. (90) **Arak #40** — 15.6

91. (75) **A Distant Soil #3** — 15.2
92. (92) **Mars #11** — 14.8
92. (95) **Warp #15** — 14.8
94. (91) **Crossfire #4** — 13.6
95. (91) **The Spirit #6** — 13.0
96. (--) **Amazing Heroes #55** — 12.4
96. (93) **Ms. Tree #11** — 12.4
98. (95) **New Talent Showcase #13** — 11.9
99. (99) **Eclipse Monthly #10** —11.9
100. (97) **Star*Reach Classics #6** — 11.2

Titles which were listed in the survey but did not make the Top 100 include Best of DC Digest, Bolt, The Complete E.C. Segar Popeye, Dog Boy, G.I. Combat, Harold Hedd, Heavy Metal, Hugo, Jonah Hex, Just Imagine, The Shade, Sgt. Rock, Southern Knights, Steve Canyon Magazine, *all other fanzines and comics-related magazines, and all Archie comics.*

In September, sales were divided as follows:

Marvel	66.0%
DC	24.0%
First	3.5%
Eclipse	1.5%
Misc	4.5%
	99.5% *because of rounding*

The five best-selling alternative comics were:
41. American Flagg! #16
44. Elfquest #20
50. Grimjack #6
51. Jon Sable #20
70. Dalgoda #2

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NOTE: With this issue, Dalgoda goes to a bi-monthly issuing. Rusts Continues to feature a full color story, new front and back covers, and a price increase in one package. See answers to all of the above questions in Dalgoda #6.

Dalgoda #5 36 pages. Full color. Published by Fantagraphics Books, Inc. Shipping in March. $2.00 (Canada $2.50).

Ambush Bug, Secret Wars II in AMAZING HEROES


1985 DC Comics, Inc.

AMAZING HEROES #88
Preview of KEITH GIFFEN & ROBERT LOREN FLEMING's wacky mini-series. Interview with *Megaton Man's* DON LLO SIM SON. Hero History of Dolphin. Pursheart the Powerful, the next original hero. Comic Book Heroes' Chapter Five, Golden Age Directory. Coming Comics. *Star Hawks* news reviews, letters. Cover of the bug by GIFFEN and LOU OKSNER.

AMAZING HEROES #89 JIM SHOOTER on *Secret Wars II*. Marvel's big project for 1985, sneak previews of the SAL BUSCEMA/STEVE LEIALOHA artwork. Hero History of The Phantom Stranger. Comic Book Heroes' Chapter Six, Golden Age Directory. Coming Comics. Top 100. *Star Hawks* news reviews, letters. Secret Wars II cover by BUSCEMA and LEIALOHA.

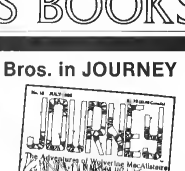
Amazing Heroes #88 68 pages. Published by Fantagraphics Books, Inc. Shipping in early March. $1.95 (Canada $2.50).

Amazing Heroes #89 68 pages. Published by Fantagraphics Books, Inc. Shipping in late March. $1.95 (Canada $2.50).

Hessian Bros. in JOURNEY

JOURNEY #18
The Hessian Brothers have kidnapped their Elfen Allyes Kalti Wolverine, MacAllister and Jimmy Acorn, making it a long, unenjoyable trip. A look at the past, and all the good beginnies. Plus a shocking contest. Multi-gun style Western and drawn by WILLIAM MESSNER LOEBS. Now on white paper!

Journey #18 36 pages. Published by Fantagraphics Books, Inc. Shipping in early March. $2.00 (Canada $2.50).



Toth Speaks in JOURNAL

THE COMICS JOURNAL #98. Extensive interview with the brilliant artist/writer. ALEX TOTH. Heavily illustrated. Reassessing Comics takes a hard look at the medium. DALE LUCIANO's Newave Comics survey continues. R. FIORE's Funnybook Roulette. Criticism by MIKE BARRIER. Plus extensive news coming comics letter section, and thought provoking reviews. Cover by ALEX TOTH.

The Comics Journal #98, 100 pages. Published by The Comics Journal, Inc. Shipping in March. $2.95 (Canada $3.75).

Kewpies Creator in NEMO

NEMO: The Classic Comics Library #12. America's first major women's cartoonist, ROSE O'NEILL, creator of the Kewpies, is Penciller/Star of the Past. WILL GOULD's sexy and violent *Red Dairy* featured in portfolio section. Interview with Disney animator WARD KIMBALL with art and photos. Communist and Socialist protest cartoons. Fantasy in the Comics: on *The Bird Dream That Made Bill a Better Boy.* More reprints of *Sam's Strip* too!

NEMO: The Classic Comics Library #12. 68 pages. Published by Fantagraphics Books, Inc. Shipping in March. $3.50 (Canada $4.25).

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Due to the incredible response to these projects, Fantagraphics Books is asking its distributors to resubmit orders for Amazing Heroes #62, 1985 PREVIEW ISSUE, and Focus on John Byrne. Fantagraphics Books is willing to go back to press immediately to fill demand for these titles if necessary. Second print runs depend on the level of response from this second solicitation.

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